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THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUDES 18 PAGES OF BANGALORE TIMES AND *8 PAGES OF TIMES PROPERTY (*CITY AREAS ONLY)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Nepal to get its youngest PM today as Balendra Shah, 35, takes oath. The former rapper and mayor who took on Singha Durbar, the nation's seat of power, will now govern from the same complex, P 15

Transgender women athletes to be excluded from women's events at Olympics after IOC agrees to a new eligibility policy which aligns with Trump's executive order on sports ahead of 2028 LA Games, P 18

Kennedy Center, which has been recast in a takeover attempt by Trump, **confirms** that **Bill Maher**, who has been a frequent critic of the US president, **will receive Mark Twain Prize**

Volodymyr Zelensky makes surprise visit to Saudi Arabia to sign security cooperation pact, particularly air protection. Ukrainian prez also says US is linking its security guarantees to Kyiv giving up Donbas, P 15

Suspected Kuki militants fire at Army post

Suspected Kuki militants opened fire on an Army post in Manipur's Bishnupur district late Wednesday, leading to a 30-minute gunbattle with Army and CRPF personnel. No casualties were reported. Security forces launched extensive search operations in nearby hills and increased surveillance. Earlier unrest in Churachandpur followed an Army vehicle accident. TNN

Prof proposes to student, thrashed

A professor in a medical college near Nelamangala was thrashed after he allegedly proposed to a student inside the classroom. The matter came to light after videos of the incident went viral. The girl & her friends attacked the professor after he finished his class. P 3

Farmers see red as tomato prices fall

Tomato prices have fallen across North Karnataka. A 20kg crate that fetched Rs 1,000-Rs 1,200 a week ago, is now selling for as low as Rs 80-Rs 100. Traders cite oversupply from simultaneous harvests, slowed exports due to West Asia conflict, and reduced hotel buying. P 4

Yamunotri allows devotees of all faiths

Yamunotri temple authorities has said all devotees are welcome, unlike Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri, where non-Hindu entry faces restrictions or faith-based conditions. The contrast has sharpened ahead of the Char Dham yatra, which begins April 19. P 10

Iran hands Hormuz pass to India, Pak, Russia, China, Iraq

20 Ships To Exit, 18 Set To Enter To Load Cargo

Dipak Dash & Atul Mathur | TNN

In what could potentially be a big relief, Iran has said it would allow India to use the Strait of Hormuz, clearing the way not only for 20 India-flagged cargo vessels stranded to its west to pass through the choke point, but also raising hopes that another 18 empty LPG tankers can go through the conflict-hit 52km strait to load cargo.

"We have permitted certain countries that we consider friendly to pass through (Strait of Hormuz). We allowed China, Russia, India, Iraq, and Pakistan to transit," Iranian foreign minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said, according to Iranian State TV. At the same time, he made it clear that ships linked to Iran's adversaries will not be allowed to transit through the strategic waterway. "The region is a war zone, and there is no reason to allow the ships of our enemies-...to pass through," he said.

TOI has learned that a dozen India-bound ships to the west of Hormuz — including five loaded with 2.3 lakh tonnes of LPG — are waiting to cross the strait and head to Indian ports. "The smooth passage of all India-flagged ships will improve availability of LPG, LNG and crude in India," an official keeping a close watch on the developments said.

FULL COVERAGE PAGES 10, 13, 14-16

▶Continued on P 10

TEHRAN IS BEGGING FOR A DEAL, SAYS TRUMP

- Israel and US confirm the killing of **Alireza Tangsiri**, commander of Iran's navy, in an overnight airstrike in Bandar Abbas. **He was overseeing the closure of the Strait of Hormuz**
- **Trump says Iran must 'get serious soon'** about negotiating a deal before it is too late, then tells Cabinet meeting Tehran is 'begging to make a deal'. Says officials are **allowing 'eight boats of oil' to pass** through, suggesting it was an act of good faith ahead of talks
- **Pak confirms relaying messages between the US and Iran.** Iranian foreign minister Araghchi says US had tried to send messages to Iran **'but that is not a conversation nor a negotiation'**

Photos: AFP/PTI

Mourners at a funeral in a cemetery in southern Tehran on Thursday

- Private fuel retailer Nayara Energy, majority-owned by Rosneft, raises petrol prices by ₹5/litre and diesel by ₹3
- Taking a swipe at US, **Chinese ambassador to India Xu Feihong says 'remarkable' development** in India and China built on hard work and wisdom of their people and **not on someone's generosity**
- **War could lower economic growth in Asia and Pacific by 1.3%**, says Asian Development Bank
- India has **60 days' worth oil stock cover and has arranged one full month of LPG supply**, govt says, reiterating there is no shortage of fuel or LPG
- While several countries have resorted to price hikes, **rationing**, and odd-even vehicle curbs, govt says **'India does not feel the need for such steps'**

Govt says 'isolated instances' of people queuing up for fuel (above, Prayagraj) triggered by 'deliberate misinformation' spread through social media

Indian, Pakistani killed by missile debris in UAE

At least two persons, an Indian and a Pakistani, were killed and three others injured on Thursday when debris of missiles intercepted by the UAE's air defence system fell on a street in Abu Dhabi. The three injured also include an Indian, local media reported. The total number of deaths has risen to 11 after the latest incident in Abu Dhabi, Gulf News reported. UAE air defences have engaged 372 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles and 1,826 UAVs so far, UAE's defence ministry said. P 15

Why Israel took 2 top names off its Iran hit list

Israel removed **Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi and parliamentary speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf** from its hit list after Pakistan urged Washington to press Israel not to target them, a Pakistani source with knowledge of the discussions told Reuters on Thursday. "The Israelis had their coordinates and wanted to take them out, we told the US if they are also eliminated then there is no one else to talk to, hence the US asked the Israelis to back off," the source said. P 15

At Board of Peace meet, a hotel deal by US, Pak

President Trump's inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington last month included some commerce as his special envoy Steve Witkoff unveiled a promising new partnership with Pakistan to explore the redevelopment of Roosevelt Hotel in Midtown Manhattan, a once glamorous but now shuttered building that Pakistan owns. While the terms are not public, a White House official described it as a potential deal between the two govts to co-own the property. P 15

Glitch-ridden bus hits truck, 14 burn to death in Andhra

Venu.Lanka@timesofindia.com

Vijayawada: A private semi-sleeper bus that had faced repeated glitches during the journey crashed head-on into a tipper truck in Andhra Pradesh early Thursday, killing 14 and injuring 28 after a fire engulfed the vehicles.

The victims, some of them asleep during the 5.45am crash, were trapped inside the bus. Initial findings suggest the steering may have jammed. The tragedy in Markapuram district was the fourth instance in six months of a passenger bus catching fire in AP.

The bus had halted many times due to technical trouble during the journey, some survivors said.

▶940 accident blackspots in K'taka, 460 on highways, P 3

▶Passenger saves lives, P 6

TOI

The sensor-operated main bus door got locked after the crash, trapping everyone inside the burning vehicle

10 dead, 40 injured as bus overturns in MP

At least 10 people were killed and 40 injured after a bus collided with another vehicle and overturned in MP's Chhindwara Thursday. The bus was returning from a function, attended by CM Mohan Yadav earlier in the day. TNN

Narrow escape for 21 as bus catches fire in B'luru

Twenty-one passengers had a narrow escape after a Bengaluru-Shivamogga KSRTC bus caught fire near Lulu Mall, close to Majestic, about 10.30pm Thursday. Driver and bystanders' timely intervention ensured no one was hurt. TNN

SC: Vague allegations no basis for dowry case

New Delhi: Criminal proceedings cannot be initiated merely based on vague and unsupported allegations, ruled SC, quashing a dowry harassment and cruelty case filed against a Kanpur-based couple in their seventies by their daughter-in-law, **reports Amit Anand Choudhary**.

A bench comprising Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan noted that the case was lodged almost seven years after the alleged incidents of cruelty and observed that citizens must be vigilant about their rights and take timely action, particularly in matrimonial disputes.

▶Lack of evidence, P 8

IN THE COURTS

- Karnataka HC issues **notices to CM and his wife** in response to a petition challenging **closure report in Muda case** | P 3
- Claiming a particular faith is the **'only true religion' in secular India amounts to insulting other faiths**, observes Allahabad HC | P 5
- **Dowry deaths severe blot on society**, says SC, asks HCs to exercise discretion while granting bail | P 8
- SC: **Govt**, not insurer, is liable **to pay compensation if a chartered vehicle meets with accident** | Inside Flap

K'taka reduces Class 1 admission age by 60 days

Bengaluru: Karnataka govt Thursday relaxed the age criteria for admission to class 1 by 60 days for the academic year 2026-27. Till now, a child had to be six as on June 1 for admission to grade 1. For this year, a child who is 5 years 10 months old as of June 1 is eligible for admission.

The new rule applies to all govt, aided & private schools across curriculum: state, CBSE, ICSE or international. The govt had fixed six years as the minimum age for admission in July 2022. It wasn't implemented after protests from parents. TNN

▶For LKG, UKG too, P 4

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Wig win: Man, 54, to get ₹55k for failed hair transplant

Vindhya.Pabolu
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Imagine paying a hefty sum for a promised hair transplant, only to walk out with a wig instead. That's exactly what happened to a Bengaluru resident. He moved Bangalore Urban II Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, alleging deficiency in service. The consumer commission ordered a refund with 6% interest and Rs 5,000 compensation.

The saga began when Alex Pillai (name changed), a 54-year-old Ejipura resident, visited Max Hair Studio International Pvt Ltd, Lavelle Road, on Aug 10, 2024, for a hair transplant consultation. He paid Rs 500 in cash and an initial Rs 5,000 via credit card. After the consultation, he paid Rs 55,000 the following day for the procedure.

Pillai claimed he explicitly informed the studio that he wanted a hair transplant with "100% results". However, after the studio's health experts reviewed his personal health details, medical issues, family background and daily job routine, it advised him to have a wig instead.

Pillai was not interested but was assured that if the wig was not fixed properly and not looking good, and if any defects were found in it, his full payment would be refunded. Trusting this assurance, he agreed to have the wig fixed instead of undergoing hair transplantation.

AI

The 54-year-old informed the studio that he wanted a hair transplant with '100% results'. After experts reviewed his medical history, they advised him to get a wig instead and assured complete refund if he was unhappy with the procedure. He, however, was not satisfied with the way the wig appeared on his face and demanded a refund, which the studio denied to pay

When the wig was fitted, he was not satisfied with the result, feeling it did not appear good on his face. He immediately requested a refund. While the studio initially promised to refund the amount online, the payment was never made. Eventually, the studio allegedly informed Pillai that the refund would not be done, leaving him feeling aggrieved and cheated.

Pillai filed a consumer complaint on June 20, 2025, alleging deficiency of service and unfair trade practices. A notice was issued to Max Hair Studio, but the studio failed to appear before the commission and was placed ex-parte.

After going through all the documents, the commission observed the studio's failure to appear amounted to an implied admission of Pillai's claims.

The commission noted that retaining the payment without delivering the assured service constituted a clear case of deficiency of service and unfair trade practice.

The commission bench, comprising president Vijaykumar M Pawale and member Anuradha V, ordered Max Hair Studio to take the wig back and refund Rs 55,000 with 6% interest from the day of payment till realisation and Rs 5,000 as compensation for mental agony and litigation costs.

Govt advances holiday for Mahavir Jayanti to Monday

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Karnataka govt advanced by a day the public holiday date for Mahavir Jayanti. As per an official notification issued Thursday, the holiday — earlier scheduled for Tuesday, March 31 — will now be observed on Monday, March 30.

The notification said the holiday will be celebrated under the provisions of Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881. This means banks, govt offices and other institutions covered under the Act will remain closed on the revised date.

Officials said the decision was taken to align the holiday with the correct observance of Mahavir Jayanti. All govt departments, financial institutions, and public sector offices have been directed to take note of the change.

SSLC third language paper postponed

The third language paper of SSLC exams will be held on March 31 instead of March 30 because of Mahavir Jayanti holiday. All other papers will be held as per schedule.

There will be no change in exams of ICSE (class 10) and ISC (class 12) of Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), scheduled for March 31.

At ₹4,047 crore, property tax receipts 40% short of ₹6,700-crore target

18% Decline In Collections Than Last Year

Hamsaveni.N
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Property tax collections in the city have again fallen short of expectations this financial year, exposing persistent gaps in compliance even as authorities intensify enforcement.

With just days left for the close of the 2025-26 fiscal, property tax collection stood at Rs 4,047.7 crore against a target of Rs 6,700 crore. That leaves a shortfall of over Rs 2,652 crore, with overall realisation at roughly 60%.

The target was inclusive of arrears from previous years. And, the Rs 4,047.7 crore collected as of March 20, includes Rs 3,286 crore of property taxes of this fiscal, and Rs 761.7 crore collected in arrears from previous years.

For this fiscal, authorities have raised a demand of Rs 4,100.2 crore and collected Rs 3,286 crore, leaving Rs 814 crore unrealised. The collections were done both under the administration of the erstwhile BBMP and the five corporations under Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), which was formed in the middle of the fiscal.

The underperformance comes despite a year marked by stepped-up recovery drives, including property attachments and the introduction of auctions. Data also shows an 18.1% decline in collections compared to the previous year's Rs 4,945.4 crore, raising concerns over the city's fiscal capacity at a time when urban infrastructure demands are rising.

The new financial year, beginning on April 1, will mark a shift in responsibility, with all five corporations directly accountable for mobilising property tax revenues to fund their operations.

Officials acknowledge that improving compliance will be critical to sustaining civic spending. Across corporations, the picture remains uneven. South and east Bengaluru have performed relatively better, each crossing about 62% of their targets. North Bengaluru, however, lags at just over 54%, reflecting deeper compliance issues in rapidly expanding areas.

Bengaluru's property tax base now covers about 21.7 lakh properties, spanning residential, commercial, mixed-use, and vacant plots.

With persistent shortfall in collections, authorities have focused on defaulters. At the start of the year, over 3.6 lakh properties were flagged for non-payment. Enforcement has steadily tightened. Officials have issued notices, attached properties, and, in extreme cases, initiated takeover proceedings. Auctions, introduced this year as a last-resort measure, mark a significant escalation.

In one such drive, 172 properties were identified for auction across corporations. Yet, only seven properties reached the auction stage, and none was ultimately sold. Officials attribute this to a mix of weak bidder participation, legal hurdles, and delays in the process.

Even so, the threat of auctions appears to be working as a deterrent. In several cases, property owners cleared dues at the last minute to avoid losing their assets. In some zones, merely announcing auctions triggered a rush of payments, helping authorities recover arrears without completing sales.

The GBA is now preparing to go a step further. Plans are underway to take over properties of chronic defaulters who fail to respond even after repeated notices and enforcement actions. Under the proposal, such properties would be acquired at a predetermined value after a final window for payment.

Officials say the move is aimed at recovering large, long-pending dues while sending a clear signal on compliance. But the limited success of auctions so far suggests that enforcement alone may not be enough.

Pic for representation

Bengaluru's property tax base covers about 21.7 lakh properties, spanning residential, commercial, mixed-use and vacant plots

"A significant share of our revenue comes from Byatarayanapura. Earlier, our zonal commissioner had ensured strong collections, but many long-pending defaulters still remain. Property tax collection is a crucial task for us as it is our primary source of income. We have clear plans to improve collections, and joint commissioners will be actively tasked with driving the process

Pommala Sunil Kumar | COMMISSIONER, BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION

"Sadly, some 10% people still don't pay. Out of about 20 lakh property owners, 18 lakh have paid. Every law-abiding citizen and honest taxpayer needs to know there are these 10% tax evaders and it's the moral and legal duty of GBA and the corporations to recover money from them. We will not stop until all tax dues are paid as per law

Munish Moudgil | SPECIAL COMMISSIONER (REVENUE), GBA

SOUTH CORP PERFORMS THE BEST

Corporations	Target 2025-26 (₹ cr)	Collection (₹ cr)	Percentage of collection
South	1,228.8	779.7	63.4%
East	1,673.5	1,053.7	62.9%
West	1,281.6	791.4	61.7%
Central	1,273.8	746.7	58.6%
North	1,242.3	676.1	54.4%
Total	**67,000**	**4,047.7**	**60.2%**

Source: GBA | *As of March 20 | Figures rounded off

GETTING IPL-READY

Syed Asif

6 holding areas, 45 exits & 2,000 cops

With the new season of Indian Premier League (IPL) set to kick off Saturday, Bengaluru city police Thursday conducted a second mock drill to assess safety arrangements at M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The venue has been under heightened scrutiny since a stampede during Royal Challengers Bangalore's title-winning celebrations on June 4, 2025 that claimed 11 lives, raising concerns over crowd management and safety preparedness.

Before game begins

Six holding areas within the stadium, estimated to accommodate 18,000-20,000 spectators, will be opened for the first time for those who reach the venue before the gates open to avoid crowding on roads and sidewalks

After match ends

There will be 45 exits to lead spectators outside the stadium, almost double the number of gates during the previous season, to avoid bottlenecks at exit points

PREPPED UP: Police, civil defence & NSG commandos at the mock drill at M Chinnaswamy stadium Thursday, ahead of Saturday's IPL match

TRAVEL TIPS

- Spectators must maximise use of public transport
- Additional parking facilities available at 44 major Metro stations for spectators with valid match ticket. High-footfall stations such as Whitefield, Central Silk Board, Electronics City, KR Pura, Madawara, RV Road, Majestic, KSR Bengaluru, Byappanahalli and Kengeri bus terminal will have this facility

- Parking fees are capped at Rs 60 for four-wheelers and Rs 30 for two-wheelers, without any time limit, at these stations
- On match days, Metro trains will run till 2am

"We are also in talks with KSCA to open the practice ground inside the complex to be used as a holding area

Seemant Kumar Singh | POLICE COMMISSIONER

IMPROVED SECURITY

- A total of 2,000 police personnel to be deployed on match days
- People without valid match tickets will not be allowed to trespass around stadium premises
- Increased number of ambulances, fire engines, and medical centres arranged

Curbs at Marathahalli junction till Sunday

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Traffic restrictions will be imposed for three days from Friday at busy Marathahalli junction in the tech corridor to facilitate the launch of Metro girders across the bridge on Outer Ring Road as part of Blue Line project.

The curbs will be in force between 12am and 3am. All vehicles from HAL side heading towards Varthur/Whitefield via Varthur Main Road and Marathahalli bridge will be restricted during this period. Traffic from the opposite direction will also face restrictions.

Motorists travelling from HAL towards Whitefield/Varthur are advised to take a left at Doddanekundi Junction, proceed to Kartik Nagar Junction, reach ORR, turn left and take a U-turn under Doddanekundi flyover via Alpine Eco Road to Anjaneya Junction and then continue via Kundalahalli Main Road and Graphite India Road to reach Whitefield.

TOI

MEN AT WORK

Vehicles coming from Varthur/Whitefield towards HAL can take the route via Kundalahalli Junction, reach Anjaneya Junction, turn left to Alpine Eco Road to ORR, take a right at Kartik Nagar Junction, proceed to Doddanekundi Junction and then turn right to Varthur Main Road towards HAL.

As an additional alternative, traffic police suggested that vehicles heading to HAL can travel via Varthur Main Road to Vibgyor Junction, turn left to Vibgyor School Road to Balegere Main Road, proceed to Kadubesanahalli Junction, turn left to ORR and then take a left at Marathahalli bridge junction to rejoin Varthur Main Road towards HAL.

METRO GIRDERS

Joy on streets back with bang

Bengaluru: **The Times of India**'s Happy Streets is back with renewed energy at Bhartiya City this Sunday. The popular community initiative promises a vibrant, traffic-free morning from 6:30am to 9:30am, bringing together residents for fitness, fun and shared experiences.

The morning begins with yoga and pranayama by Sarvebhavanthu Sukhinah Yoga. The tempo picks up with a fitness dance session by Swingers Dance Inc. Adding to the excitement, there will be a musical performance by Mic & Melody. Creativity takes centre stage with singing training by 'From Mug to Mic'.

The event also features dance performances by Thaalalaya Dance Academy, Divine Souls Dance Studio and Stylish Chinna's Dance Studio. It will end with the announcement of winner for a lucky draw hosted by Bhima Jewellers, presenting partners of the initiative. TNN

BHIMA presents HAPPY streets — OUR ROADS. OUR WAY.

Passengers slam new rail ticket cancellation policy

Anush.S
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: With an updated ticket cancellation policy set to come into effect, railway passengers from the state claim it could significantly affect flexibility in travel planning.

According to the new cancellation norms announced by railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Tuesday, passengers who cancel tickets less than 72 hours ahead of their journey will face significant deductions. The changes are likely to be implemented from next month in a phased manner.

Regular passengers and enthusiasts argue the move could affect students and working professionals who plan to travel to their hometowns at short notice.

Tickets cancelled within 72-24 hours of the journey will now be liable for a deduction of 25% from the journey fare, followed by a 50% deduction if cancelled 24-8 hours prior to the journey. No refunds will be initiated for any cancellation made less than 8 hours before the journey, which was 4 hours earlier.

Defending the policy described as a reform, the railways said it is a step towards transparency, to inform passengers in time whether their tickets are confirmed or not. "Railways, under continuous reforms, has increased the chart preparation timing from 4 hours to 9-18 hours before departure. This has provided clarity to passengers travelling from distant locations regarding their journey," the statement read.

Ticket cancellations in recent years have turned into a boon for the South Western Railway (SWR) zone, which covers the majority of Karnataka. It earned Rs 90.4 crore from ticket cancellation or clerkage charges over the past five years.

The amount rose from Rs 27 crore in 2023 to about Rs 32.9 crore in 2025.

With a significant chunk of cancellations made less than 72 hours prior to the journey, penalty revenue could increase.

File photo

NOT TRAVEL FRIENDLY: Regular passengers argue the move could affect students and working professionals who plan to travel from their office to hometows at a short notice

"There have been previous instances of cancellation when I was travelling to Palakkad. I already had a confirmed ticket, and there was a waiting list ticket for another train which reaches faster. When the latter got confirmed around 60 hours before the journey, I was charged only a marginal amount. Though there's not much of an issue with the last two phases of refund, now people will be more careful before booking tickets

Sumant Atreyas | STUDENT

"There is a huge population of migrants in Bengaluru, and a lot of them, especially working professionals, decide to travel at short notice. In certain situations, leave might get cancelled or rescheduled. This also applies to students, and 72 hours isn't a good timeframe to finalise. We have decided to approach railway officials and the minister in this matter, as this is unacceptable

Reji Kumar | GENERAL SECRETARY, KERALA SAMAJAM BANGALORE

"This new policy feels like punishing passengers. What will we do in case of emergency situations where we have to change our travel plans? This will also increase the demand for Tatkal quota, which is already very difficult to get

Bharati Srivastav | ANCHOR

Govt mandates blood bank, on-site doc for maternity hosps

Bengaluru: In a bid to plug critical gaps in maternal and newborn healthcare, the govt has directed all public health institutions providing delivery care to ensure uninterrupted availability of blood and blood products, mandating advance tie-ups with nearby blood banks to prevent delays during emergencies.

The govt issued an order Thursday following findings from a recent maternal death audit report that flagged systemic and administrative shortcomings . The order directs hospitals to enter into prior agreements with at least two to three govt or licensed private blood banks. The order also reiterates that 25% of blood collected in donation camps must be supplied to govt facilities.

To strengthen round-the-clock emergency care, the govt has also made it mandatory for all specialist doctors to reside at their designated headquarters instead of commuting from distant locations and log their attendance twice a day — at 10am and 10pm. The govt has also reiterated its earlier order on the compulsory use of the ARC partograph system. "Non-compliance will be treated as serious negligence and may lead to withholding incentives," the order stated. TNN

From a jeweller to gazetted officer, these IIMB students redefine MBA journey

When Indian Institute of Management Bengaluru (IIMB) holds its 51st convocation Friday, the B-school will also celebrate the diversity of students who graduate from the flagship Post Graduate Programme (PGP) in management. TOI catches up with some students, who spoke about how different their journey in the management school was.

SIDDHARTH SHARMA

He was a gazetted officer before he joined IIM-B. "I was an officer with six years of experience. Leaving it behind to start again with an MBA programme was not just a career move, it was a total disruption of my identity. I quickly realised that to survive, I have to unlearn almost everything I knew. This meant trading the comfort of seniority for the vulnerability of a student," said Siddharth Sharma.

He recalls how his transition hit a brutal wall during summer placements. Despite his credentials, he received zero shortlists from over 200 companies. "To the corporate world, my unconventional background was a risk they were not ready to take. I wondered if I had made a massive mistake. I worked harder than ever. By the time final placements arrived, the resilience I had built through the lows of the previous year paid off," he said.

RIDDHI DUGAR

Originally from Tamil Nadu, she is a sportsperson, who has competed in state and national-level tournaments for tennis. Alongside sports, Riddhi Dugar has a strong track record in debating. But, above all, she is the first woman in her family to pursue a formal college education. "Coming from Stella Maris College, Chennai, a place with relatively few students traditionally progressing to IIMs, I had limited precedents to follow. As a BCom fresher, I had to chart my own path, often figuring things out independently. This meant being proactive in seeking opportunities, building conviction in my choices, and continuously pushing myself beyond my comfort zone," she said.

AKANKSHA NENE

At 19, fuelled by curiosity for natural gems and accessories, she founded her own gemstone jewellery business. "I come from a humanities background and started this venture without any family business background. The 1.5 years I spent running this business provided a foundation that was later validated by formal MBA learnings at IIMB," Akanksha Nene said.

She put up the stall for a campus fest and even fetched a revenue of Rs 1 lakh. "While the venture is on a small scale earlier, the vision is to make it a better, viable business that reaches more people and creates jobs. I will work on it part time after graduating," she said.

Akanksha said she's proud to have paved a way for younger aspirants and talent from backgrounds like the arts and humanities, entrepreneurial and creative fields.

ZOTHANZUALI KHAWLHRING

Growing up in Mizoram, a small state in India's northeast, where life moves at a quieter pace and communities are closely knit, Zothanzuali Khawlhring felt institutions like IIMB existed somewhere far away, geographically and mentally.

"What helped me most during my time at IIM Bangalore was realising that everyone arrives here with their own story. Some journeys are very different from others, but they all carry a shared sense of curiosity and ambition. Being in that environment pushes you to grow not only academically, but also personally," she said.

Prof proclaims love for medical student in class, faces backlash

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A series of events turned Sri Siddhartha Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre at T Begur near Nelamangala, Bengaluru Rural, into a battleground after a controversial classroom episode involving a professor and an alleged love proposal triggered outrage and violence.

CHAOS ON CAMPUS

The incident reportedly took place Wednesday and came to light through videos recorded by several students on their mobile phones and shared widely.

Home minister G Parameshwara is the governing council chairman of the college, according to the college website.

Trouble began when a professor, identified as Mohammed Abdul, allegedly proposed to a student inside a classroom.

Three videos that have gone viral purportedly identify the professor. In one of the clips, the professor, standing on the podium addressing the class, is heard saying: "I couldn't resist the immense love given by the batch, and I would like to propose to one of the most important girls in your batch. I shall distribute chocolates to the batch." The video showed him ending the address by saying, 'I love you', to the girl.

Mohammed Abdul was beaten up after he came out of class

Video grab

The student immediately objected to this and asked him to take up the matter with the principal and said the entire batch of students would go to the principal.

The professor got into an argument with her, claiming she had proposed to him recently. When she questioned him about his statement, the professor replied: "Didn't you say I love you? Didn't you say it?" He claimed there was CCTV footage to support his statement, prompting the girl to demand that he show it.

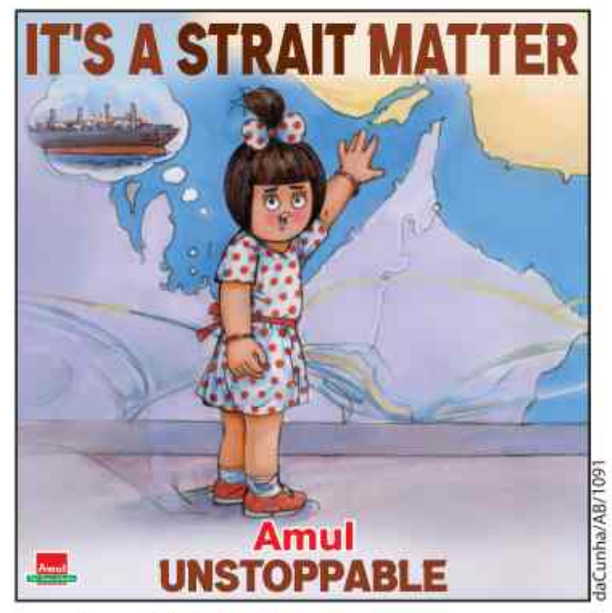
Abdul then walked out of the classroom, telling her that he would speak to her the next day, while asking students to have chocolates.

The professor had brought a carton full of chocolates to class and arranged for a person to distribute them among students.

However, tension escalated soon after Abdul exited the classroom. The agitated girl, accompanied by a group of students, started hitting the professor with her slipper as other students joined in, abused him and assaulted him. The professor reportedly fled the scene.

Bengaluru Rural district superintendent of police Chandrakanth MV said a case has been registered against Abdul at Nelamangala Rural police station.

"The professor will be served a notice to appear before the investigating officer. There is no counter-complaint by him over the assault," an officer said. The college principal didn't respond to **TOI**'s calls and messages on the issue.



MAPPING DANGER

11,320 People Lost Their Lives And 53,940 Were Injured In Road Mishaps Across State Last Year, Shows Data

940 accident blackspots in K'taka, 460 on highways

Syed Asif

RUSH HOUR: Pedestrians brave heavy traffic at 8th Mile Junction on Tumakuru Road

Suchith Kidiyoor & Rajiv Kalkod | TNN

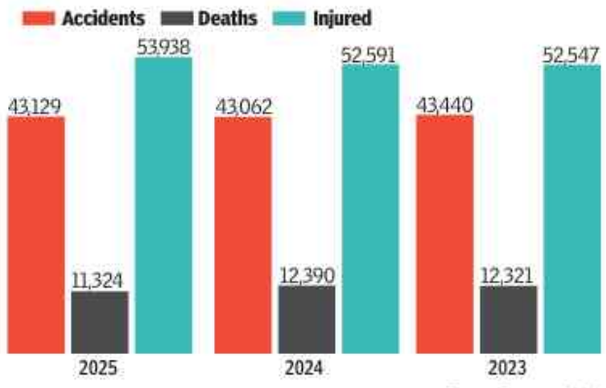
Bengaluru: Certain stretches of national highways in Karnataka have emerged as most dangerous, accounting for more than half of nearly 1,000 accident blackspots reported from within the state till date.

According to official data, 459 of 942 blackspots in Karnataka are located on NHs maintained by National Highways Authority of India. A blackspot is a place where three or more fatal accidents are reported in three years on a 500-metre stretch. Within Bengaluru, officials identified 27 blackspots, excluding three additional locations on NICE Road, which connects Tumakuru Road with Hosur Road.

As many as 11,324 died and 53,938 were injured in road accidents across the state in 2025 — an average of 31 deaths and 147 injuries a day. Over the past five years, the state recorded over 2.4 lakh accidents, claiming 66,791 lives and leaving 2.9 lakh people injured.

Of the top 10 blackspots identified by state police during 2022-24, nine are in south Karnataka. Of these, three are in Bengaluru. Topping the list is the stretch from 8th Mile Junction to Nagasandra toll in the Peenya area with 40 accidents and 12 deaths. Second is a stretch at Nidaghatta, near Maddur, on NH-275 in Mandya district with 43 accidents and 18 deaths.

DEATH TRAPS ON THE WAY



Source: Transport dept

TOP-10 DANGEROUS ZONES IN 2022-24

Area	Blackspots	Number of accidents	Number of fatalities
Bengaluru city	8th Mile junction to Navayuga toll (NH-4)	40	12
Mandya	Nidaghatta (NH-275)	43	18
Bengaluru Rural	T Begur	39	15
Mysuru	Ganapathi Schinanda Ashrama — Nanjanagudu Main Road (NH-766)	38	11
Belagavi	New Vantamuri (NH-48)	33	15
Bengaluru city	Kannamangalala Palya — BB Road (NH-44)	29	10
Ramanagara	Lakshmi Sagara Gate (NH-275)	28	9
Mandya	NM Circle (NH-150 A)	22	14
Bengaluru district	Thippagondanahalli (NH-48)	20	16
Vijayapura	Korammadevi Temple (NH-52)	19	20

(Source: Police and transport depts)

The only stretch from North Karnataka was near Korammadevi temple on NH-52 in Vijayapura district with 19 accidents and 20 fatalities.

DG&IGP MA Saleem said measures are being taken to bring down accidents at such spots. "We inspected road engineering at these spots; then, we addressed the matter in coordination with urban local bodies; we took a few speed-calming measures like displaying hoardings and other signboards, warning commuters to drive carefully," he said. Transport minister Ramalinga Reddy said long-term interventions include correcting road design flaws, widening roads and constructing underpasses and road overbridges.

64 in Bengaluru; KIA stretch tops

Bengaluru traffic police identified 64 accident-prone blackspots between 2023 and 2025. According to joint commissioner of police (traffic) Kartik Reddy, Chikkajala traffic police limits on Bengaluru–Ballari Road (NH 44) — the highway connecting the city with Kempegowda International Airport — recorded the highest number of blackspots, with five locations. The accident-prone junctions include Hunasamaranahalli, MVIT, Bettahalasuru, Meenukunte Hosuru and Sadahalli Gate, each reporting more than 15 accidental deaths during the period. Police said overspeeding and jaywalking were the primary causes. Other areas with a high number of blackspots include Yelahanka, Electronics City and Kengeri, with four locations each, followed by Bellandur, JB Nagar, Mahadevapura and Byatarayanapura (Mysuru Road) with three blackspots each, according to traffic police data.

DCP (west, traffic) Anoop Shetty said joint teams led by ACPs, along with officials from GBA, NHAI and other agencies, will submit reports on measures.

Youngster dies as bike rams delivery agent's two-wheeler

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A 22-year-old youngster from Kerala died after hitting a food-delivery agent riding a Yulu scooter on Suranjan Das Road, HAL traffic police limits, late Wednesday night.

The victim is Stephen George Binu, a resident of Basavanagar. Yulu rider Mohammed Anwar, 37, is recovering from injuries in Victoria Hospital.

FREAK ACCIDENT

A private company employee, Binu was returning home on his motorcycle when the accident occurred at 10.30pm.

"Anwar was riding his scooter on the pavement opposite the aerospace office. Suddenly, he came onto the road, rode towards a median that was open and entered the other side.

A car, coming in the opposite direction, applied brakes suddenly on seeing Anwar. Binu, who was riding parallel to the car, failed to notice Anwar and rammed his Yulu.

Though Binu was wearing a helmet, he sustained deep injuries on his chest after hitting the pavement," an investigating officer said.

Student tries to book seat in bus, injured

An attempt to reserve a seat by putting her bag through the window of a moving KSRTC bus at Tumakuru bus terminal proved costly for 17-year-old paramedical student Harishta.

According to police, Harshita fell in the attempt and one of her legs was fractured after it came under the wheels of the bus. An investation is ongoing.

Traffic curbs on Mys Rd for 2 days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Traffic on Mysuru Road will be regulated Friday and Saturday in view of Brahma Rathotsava, organised by Shri Gaali Anjaneya Swamy Temple. Thousands of devotees are expected to attend the fair.

Teen, mom held after woman & her brother stabbed to death

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Police said the minor's mother had a relationship with the other woman's husband and there were repeated fights between the families, leading to the crime

Bengaluru: An alleged extramarital affair ended on a brutal note with a 16-year-old boy and his homemaker-mother stabbing a woman and her younger brother to death in their house at HMT Layout, Peenya, Thursday.

The victims are homemaker Yamuna Mallegowda, 36, and her brother Sudeep, 34, a factory worker. The boy and his mother were arrested on murder charges.

Deputy commissioner of police (northwest) DL Nagesh said, "It is true the minor attacked the victims with the knife. But the question is, from where was the knife taken? And what was the boy's mother doing when her son attacked and killed the victims? We strongly suspect her role. Therefore, we arrested them and are questioning them."

Preliminary probe revealed the minor's mother had a relationship with Yamuna's businessman-husband, Mallegowda. There were repeated fights between the two families due to this, and last month, the matter was reported at the police station.

On Thursday 9.30am, the boy's mother allegedly called Yamuna on her mobile, asking her to come to her house immediately.

Yamuna decided to take her younger brother, Sudeep, with her. "Soon, a fight broke out between the boy's mother and others. As tempers soared, screams were heard and neighbours rushed into the house through the door, which was ajar. To their shock, Yamuna and Sudeep were lying on the floor with multiple stab injuries. The knife was left in Yamuna's back," an investigating officer said.

The boy had locked himself inside the room while his mother was sitting near the kitchen, weeping, police pointed out.

Ordinance plan focuses on city's vertical growth

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

APARTMENT ACT

Bengaluru: Signalling a shift towards vertical growth in the city, the govt Thursday said it will go ahead with Karnataka Apartment Ownership and Management Act 2025 (KAOMA), with plans to promulgate an ordinance soon — a move expected to benefit lakhs of apartment residents.

Replying to a debate on the city's development in the assembly, deputy CM DK Shivakumar said the ordinance will be issued after discussions with stakeholders and legislators.

BJP members led by opposition leader R Ashoka raised apartment residents' long-pending demand for the law. Acknowledging the issue, Shivakumar said, "If not for a few clarifications, we would have brought in the Act by now. Nevertheless, we will go ahead with an ordinance. But prior to that I will hold a meeting with Bengaluru MLAs and discuss some issues with you (Ashoka)."

Senior BJP member CN Ashwath Narayan urged the govt to promote vertical expansion given the city's land constraints. "It may sound as if we are helping builders. But by giving more floor area ratio (FAR), it will help create self-containing cities. The govt must think in that direction," he said.

Agreeing, Shivakumar said the city's growth model will shift. "We have realized there is no scope for horizontal growth and vertical growth is the need for the hour. We will focus on vertical growth through the BDA, barring a few exceptional cases," he said, while also seeking cooperation for a dedicated parking policy.

The move was welcomed by Bangalore Apartment Federation. "We thank both CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar for bringing the KAOMA discussion to a conclusion in the assembly... We believe this Act will usher in greater transparency and accountability" said Satish Mallya, president of BAF.

HC notice to CM, wife on Muda B-report

Bengaluru: The high court Thursday issued notices to CM Siddaramaiah and his wife Parvathy in response to a petition challenging Lokayukta police's closure report in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (Muda) alternative sites allotment case.

The closure or cancellation report — called B report — was submitted on Feb 12, 2025. This was accepted by the special court for hearing cases against elected representatives on Jan 28, 2026, exonerating the chief minister, his wife and other accused.

Challenging the decision, activist Snehamayi Krishna claimed the special court did not properly consider the allegations and the case was about abuse of constitutional office. He said the special court had allowed investigation against Muda officials arising out of the same action. Denotification of land, its transfer and allotment of 14 compensatory sites (to the wife of CM) form a single, composite chain of acts and should not be compartmentalised, he said.

HC also ordered notices to Lokayukta police and Enforcement directorate. TNN

Managers: Policy is act of benevolent sexism

▶ Continued from page 1

The govt had on Nov 20, 2025, issued an order providing for one-day paid menstrual leave each month to all women employees.

The notification is arbitrary and unreasonable, and violates Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to equality, the petitioners said. Rather than promoting equality, it reinforces stereotypes that portray women as physically weaker and less capable, thereby undermining the very objective of equality laws.

The policy is an act of "benevolent sexism," which under the guise of protection, perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces paternalistic attitudes, they asserted.

True gender equality in the workplace requires policies that foster an inclusive environment, address systemic barriers and provide universal support for health and well-being, rather than creating distinctions, they said.

The matter is listed before Justice Anant Ramanath Hegde, who is currently hearing petitions filed by employers' association opposing the state govt's notification.

Empty ambulance driver caught for drunk driving

Bengaluru: An ambulance driver, driving his emergency vehicle with beacons and siren on, was caught not only for driving without a patient Thursday afternoon, but for driving under the influence of alcohol.

According to police, the ambulance wrongly entered New BEL Road from MS Ramaiah Hospital direction, causing a huge traffic jam around noon.

"Somehow, we cleared the traffic and then inspected the ambulance. We found it empty and there was no patient. Nor was the driver, identified as Darshan, 29, heading to a patient's place. He confessed to having switched on the lights and siren without any purpose. We subjected him to a test and found he was under the influence of alcohol," deputy commissioner of police (traffic-west) Anoop Shetty said. TNN

DKS: B'luru among top 10 global tech hubs, don't make Hyd comparisons

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A debate on global rankings of Bengaluru and Hyderabad led to testy exchanges in the assembly Thursday, with BJP accusing the govt of ignoring infrastructure concerns.

Citing a **TOI** report on the 'WeAreCity 2026' study by UnboxingBLR and How India Lives, opposition leader R Ashoka and his BJP colleague CN Ashwath Narayan said the govt has remained quiet on key issues even as the two cities are increasingly compared.

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, also Bengaluru development minister, said the report placed Bengaluru among the world's top tech hubs. "While San Francisco is ranked first and London second, Bengaluru stands sixth, behind Beijing. Hyderabad is placed 26. I am not keen on competing with Hyderabad," he said.

Ashoka warned the govt's silence could take a political turn. "If you do not clarify and speak now, it will take a political turn as the INDIA block led by Congress is at the helm in Telangana and your friend Revanth Reddy is CM," he said.

Narayan said comparisons were inevitable but Bengaluru remained distinct. "There is no city in India like Bengaluru," he said. "But in terms of cost of living and facilities, Hyderabad is nearly 50% more affordable. Yet, Bengaluru's cosmopolitan nature and talent pool are unparalleled. We must build on this."

Shivakumar said he was aware of the city's challenges. "I have also read the **TOI** report. As you all know, I was born in Kanakapura and shifted to Bengaluru for schooling. Bengaluru has given me everything. I want to contribute meaningfully to its growth. I am aware that I cannot do it alone and require cooperation from all," he said.

Highlighting the state's education base, he said Karnataka has about 250 engineering colleges and 70 medical colleges, producing nearly 14,000 doctors annually. He said many professionals in global hubs like Silicon Valley are from Karnataka.

Referring to his visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos, he said global leaders continue to recognise Bengaluru's talent. "The prime minister of the Netherlands told me that every two of three technocrats in Silicon Valley are from Karnataka. They are now directly collaborating with Bengaluru-based IT firms, saving nearly 40% in costs," he said.

Noting that the city has around 26 lakh IT professionals and offices of about 400 Fortune 500 companies, he said: "The American ambassador requested the names of 10 international schools as expats want their kids to study in the city. Bengaluru will continue to lead, and other cities will follow. We will build on our strengths and take the city forward."

Pics: TOI

NO HOLDS BARRED: BJP's Munirathna (left) and deputy CM DK Shivakumar square off in the assembly on Thursday

Internal reservation: Cabinet meet put off

The govt indefinitely postponed a special cabinet meeting scheduled Friday to discuss the internal reservation imbroglio, citing the model code of conduct which is in force. Besides job aspirants, the Congress govt is facing pressure from multiple caste groups both for and against internal reservation and has already deferred the meeting twice. The latest postponement is likely to delay the recruitment to 56,432 posts.

Tempers flare as Shivakumar, Munirathna trade ugly barbs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A discussion on Bengaluru city's development veered off course in the assembly Thursday as deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar and BJP's Munirathna traded personal remarks, prompting speaker UT Khader to intervene.

While replying to the debate, Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru development portfolio, took exception to Munirathna's comments on alleged land dealings, saying the BJP member had "narrated his own story" while discussing infrastructure. Shivakumar said he did not fully understand what Munirathna meant.

"I've known him for 45 years and he has shared his woes," Shivakumar said. "I know what happened in his car, in his office in Vidhana Soudha and elsewhere. I don't want to bring it up here"

At this, Munirathna demanded Shivakumar speak "openly". However, the DCM asked him to sit and said it wasn't he who had attempted to harm opposition leader R Ashoka "by trying to inject him with the HIV virus".

The jibe was a reference to accusations Munirathna faced, including sexual assault and claims that he tried to inject political opponents with the AIDS virus. Munirathna has denied the accusations.

Trying to ease tensions, Ashoka urged restraint. "I do not know what has transpired between you two," the LoP said. "Many important issues need to be discussed here. These two should be called separately and a special session held for them."

IN THE HOUSE

Khader too asked Muniratha to take his seat, but he insisted on responding. Continuing his attack, he accused Shivakumar of misusing power. "Do not indulge in hit-and-run statements. I have the strength to respond. I am not afraid," he said. Shivakumar hit back, saying, "Does he want to see my capacity?" Both then exchanged expletives.

BJP's S Suresh Kumar called for restraint. "Such personal references will not bring dignity to the House," he said.

As tempers rose, Congress members entered the well demanding action against Munirathna, leading to noisy scenes. IT-BT minister Priyank Kharge accused BJP of backing a man who faced serious charges. "Those accused of such offences are being given prominence," he alleged. He also countered Ashoka's demand to expunge the expletives, questioning why statements should be removed after being made.

Speaker Khader eventually put a lid on the issue, saying the remarks would be expunged. He also expressed disappointment, saying: "Such remarks send the wrong message. Karnataka is not known for revenge politics. This will leave a black mark on the House," Khader said.

Wrinkle for Congress as rebel stays put in Davanagere fray

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Davanagere: What appeared a straightforward fight in the Davanagere South bypoll has turned into a potential three-cornered contest for governing Congress after rebel Sadiq Pailwan refused to withdraw his nomination.

At the end of the day Thursday, the last day to withdraw, 25 candidates remained, including 14 from the Muslim community. Besides Pailwan, SDPI nominee Afsar Kudlipet is also in the fray, raising concerns over a split in Congress's traditional minority vote base.

"Chief minister Siddaramaiah and some ministers tried to persuade me to withdraw, but I will remain in the election fray. If I lose, it will be as if an Ahinda leader has lost," said Pailwan.

Congress has fielded Samarth, grandson of the late Shamanur Shivashankarappa whose death necessitated the election, but a section of Muslims was miffed. Muslims account for nearly 40% of the constituency's 2.3 lakh electorate, and they expected a candidate from the minority community.

TOI

SET TO BE INKED: The bypoll is scheduled for April 9

Congress' position appeared strong after BJP nominated Srinivas T Dasakariyappa, an ST candidate, a move seen as avoiding direct confrontation with the family of Shamanur, who are Lingayats.

A Congress delegation led by housing minister BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan, KPCC president Saleem Ahmed and MLA Rizwan Arshad held a closed-door meeting with Pailwan at his residence but failed to secure a breakthrough. Instead, Pailwan's supporters raised "go back" slogans.

"Pailwan is a loyal member of Congress, and he is naturally hurt since he was aspiring for the ticket," said Khan. "The opportunity to withdraw was missed due to paucity of time. Still, we will pacify him and his supporters."

Meanwhile, Congress expelled H Suban Sab from the party for six years after he too refused to withdraw his nomination as an independent candidate. Sab served as president of Congress' labour wing in the Davanagere district unit.

For the Bagalkot bypoll, nine candidates remained in the fray after five, including Govindraj Ballary, withdrew their nomination. A release from the office of the chief electoral officer also said raids in Bagalkot and Davanagere led to the seizure of Rs 66.3 lakh in cash, 232 litres of alcohol valued at Rs 10 lakh, and other valuables.

Siddaramaiah defends use of special flights

Bengaluru: CM Siddaramaiah Thursday defended his govt's use of special flights, saying the decision was aimed at saving time and not a case of extravagant spending.

Responding to opposition claims in the council, he said, "Criticism is part of democracy, but there should be valid reasons for it. They (BJP) are accusing me of travelling on special flights, but Basavaraj Bommai (former CM of BJP) spent over Rs 37 crore in 2021-22 and the same amount in 2022-23. Why did they not question it at that time?"

To drive home the point, Siddaramaiah said his govt spent Rs 12 crore in 2023-24, Rs 21 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 21 crore in 2025-26 on special flights — significantly lower than BJP's. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi spent around Rs 814 crore on visits to foreign countries. Was this extravagant spending?" he asked.

Opposition leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy objected to the comparison, saying the state should not equate itself with the Centre.

Siddaramaiah shot back, saying: "States are not municipalities. The federal system will be strong when states are strong. So, we can compare the state with the Centre. We collected over Rs 5 lakh crore as taxes and gave it to the Centre. We should demand answers when the Centre gives us less." TNN

SHORT TAKES

Skilling centre demand for transgender people

CM Siddaramaiah affirmed his commitment to social justice, saying he would discuss with brass of the social welfare department demands raised for the transgender community, including housing, completion of education, and setting up of a skilling centre. Bharathi Shetty raised the demands in the council, saying nearly 1,000 transgender persons she interacted with had not received the Rs 30,000 financial assistance promised by the govt. She also pointed out that physical and social challenges during schooling often force transgender persons to drop out, pushing many into begging. She said transgender persons should be given access to education, skill training, and exposure to culture and literature.

Forest dept to reclaim land with air force

Forest minister Eshwar Khandre told the assembly that 452 acres and 4.5 guntas of forest land allotted to Indian Air Force at Jarakabande Kaval in 1987 was cancelled in 2017, and steps will be taken to reclaim another 83 acres still under its control. He said 58 acres were illegally diverted to Bengaluru Metro project and recovery will be initiated. He said the IAF has not complied with norms under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Khandre also ruled out govt jobs for kin of wildlife attack victims, but said relief has been raised to Rs 20 lakh with Rs 4,000 monthly aid.

Raise special grant to ₹5cr, demand MLCs

Members of the legislative council demanded CM Siddaramaiah increase their special grant to at least Rs 5 crore for developmental work in their constituencies. SL Bhojegowda of JD(S) proposed the increase soon after Siddaramaiah defended the state budget in the council. He said most members spend the Rs 2 crore allocated every year on improving infrastructure in schools. Chairman Basavaraj Horatti asked Siddaramaiah to make an annoucement in the House but the CM said he would decide later.

Private bills push for regional board, separate coastal policy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Two private resolutions — for a Kittur Karnataka development board and a separate coastal Karnataka policy — were introduced in the assembly on the final day of the budget session Thursday, and both received support from members across parties.

Congress' NH Konareddi, citing persistent backwardness in parts of north Karnataka outside the Kalyana region, urged the govt to constitute a new board on the lines of the Kalyana Karnataka Regional Development Board.

"I am advancing this resolution on behalf of the 45 MLAs from the seven districts outside of Kalyana Karnataka but part of the underdeveloped north Karnataka districts," Konareddi said. "I urge the govt to allocate Rs 5,000 crore for developing these districts."

The proposed region includes Dharwad, Belagavi, Gadag, Bagalkot, Vijayapura, Haveri, and parts of Uttara Kannada. MLAs including Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Laxman Savadi, Vinay Kulkarni and Aravind Bellad supported the proposal.

TOI

SALVO: MB Patil, industries minister, in the council Thursday

"The Govind Rao committee report says there are 20 taluks of the 59 aspirational taluks located in these seven districts," Bellad (BJP) said. "An allocation of Rs 50 crore per constituency or Rs 5,000 crore for the new board will go a long way in this regard."

In reply, planning and statistics minister D Sudhakar said the govt would discuss the issue in the next session. "In order to remove the regional imbalance, we intend to use all necessary means possible to rectify them," Sudhakar said.

Separately, BJP's Gururaj Gantihole called for a dedicated coastal Karnataka policy, arguing that the region's challenges differ from the rest of the state. Members pointed to issues such as coastal regulation norms, dependence on marine-based livelihoods and difficulties in attracting large investments despite economic potential.

IT-BT minister Priyank Kharge said the govt would address these concerns through existing frameworks, including the Local Economic Accelerator Programme. Sudhakar said the govt would convene a meeting of 13 coastal legislators, including speaker UT Khader and Kharge, to examine whether a separate coastal policy is required

N K'taka farmers bear the brunt as tomato prices plunge 90%

Chamaraj Savadi | TNN

Vijayanagara: A sharp fall in tomato prices across north Karnataka, especially in Vijayanagara, has left hundreds of farmers, traders and market players struggling. A 20kg crate that fetched Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,200 a week ago, is now selling for as low as Rs 80-Rs 100.

At the APMC yard in Hosapete, arrivals have surged in the past few days. But the demand has not kept pace. Retail prices too have dropped sharply, with tomatoes being sold at Rs 20 for 2-4kg in local markets. "Arrivals have increased suddenly this week, but there are not enough buyers. Prices have collapsed overnight," said Maula Hussein, a trader at the APMC yard.

Farmers say the price crash has put them under pressure, as the returns are not even covering basic costs. "We took loans to grow the crop. Now, even the transport cost is not matching. Some farmers are leaving the produce in the market," said Somanagouda Patil, a grower from Kudligi taluk.

Traders point to a combination of factors behind the decline, including a supply glut due to simultaneous harvesting and weak demand. "Exports have slowed down amid the West Asia conflict, while bulk buyers like hotels are lifting less stock due to non-availability of commercial LPG. This has impacted the market," another trader said. Consumers, however, are seeing some relief. "Tomatoes are cheaper now. We are buying more as their prices have fallen," said a homemaker in Hosapete.

Officials said they are keeping a close watch on the situation. "There is excess arrival in APMCs due to peak harvest. Prices may stabilise once the supply reduces," an agriculture department official said. APMC secretary Siddaiah Swamy said such price swings are common in perishable commodities and stressed the need for steps to stabilise prices.

T Nagaraj, district president of Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha, has called for govt intervention, including procurement support and minimum price assurance.

Age relaxation for LKG, UKG admissions too

▶Continued from page 1

This year too, parents approached the school education department against the rule. "Parents of children who have not completed six years of age are confused. Hence, a two-month waiver this year," said Madhu Bangarappa, minister for school education and literacy, in the legislative assembly. The exemptions for 2026-27 are in accordance with Karnataka Education Act, 1983, he added.

The minister added that the relaxation will be applicable to LKG and UKG admissions too. He said the govt is planning a separate policy for pre-KG as there is currently no regulation for these grades. The minister's announcement evoked mixed responses from parents. While several parents welcomed the move, others wanted the relaxation extended to 90 days.

Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools of Karnataka condemned the move.

"The government has no commitment to national alignment. This will cause trouble for students who will shift states. This is not a question of NEP, but is mentioned in the Right to Education. The government has no respect for its own orders. They are willing to give relief to a few parents with influence," said D Shashi Kumar, secretary of the association.

MLAs left waiting at gates, says speaker

▶Continued from page 1

Currently, each MLA gets a complimentary ticket for P3 stand, while ministers get two of those tickets in addition to an invite to watch the match from the committee room, a VIP box.

"If KSCA gives away 1,200 passes to legislators, it will have very few left for others, which include other govt arms like police, Great Bengaluru Authority, fire, food and civil supplies. This is apart from the passes earmarked for BCCI, international and domestic players, coaches, umpires and clubs, among others," a KSCA source told **TOI**.

Tickets to VIP stands could be another bone of contention because KSCA controls only a part of tickets/passes and a majority is with the franchise. Premier stands are limited: A case in point is P2 with 320 seats and each ticket costs Rs 55,000 on average. "There aren't many premier seats to accommodate requests because the franchise, too, has sponsor and client commitments," added the source.

Speaker Khader noted that MLAs were often left waiting at the gates. "One ticket is given per MLA, and VIP tickets are issued only if the MLA attends in person. However, MLAs find it difficult to stand in queues as staff do not recognise them, leading to a sense of disrespect," he said.

"Many MLAs, therefore, avoid attending matches. Inform KSCA that at least four 'VIP stand' tickets should be provided to MLAs and their families," he added.

BJP's R Ashoka said they have crores of rupees, yet they treat "us in a way we have to plead for tickets. Our tickets are non-transferable," he added. "Teach them a lesson. We are not asking for free tickets; we are willing to pay," he said, adding KSCA pays nominal rent for 16.3-acre stadium land while match tickets are priced between Rs 2,000 and Rs 3,000.

Other cities have 16% major rds, B'luru has only 8%: DKS

▶Continued from page 1

Shivakumar said a proposal had been received from Union minister Shobha Karandlaje and Yeshwantpur MLA ST Somashekhar to extend Metro services to Tavarekere. "We are planning a double-decker flyover on the stretch to decongest western parts of Bengaluru. The work on 109km elevated corridor will begin soon," he said. He assured BJP's R Ashoka that the Banashankari skywalk from BMTC bus stand to Metro station would be taken up soon.

On structural constraints, he said: "While all other cities have 16% major roads, Bengaluru has only 8%. Our five options of compensation in building Bangalore Business Corridor have yielded results. This will bypass major traffic to pass via north and east Bengaluru towards Chennai."

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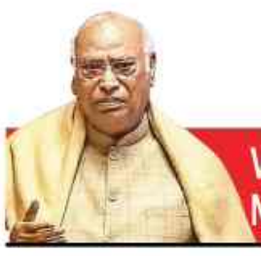

WHY GOVT IN 'HURRY' TO AMEND WOMEN'S QUOTA LAW, MUST CALL ALL-PARTY MEETING AFTER POLLS: KHARGE

DMK HITS BACK AT AIADMK GENERAL SECRETARY PALANISWAMI OVER REMARKS ON ALLIANCE PARTNERS

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NOTE: Teleconsultation is useful for many routine issues, but emergencies, severe symptoms, or urgent distress still need immediate in-person medical care

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

Murder accused gets 25 yrs RI for raping 6yo niece while out on bail

A Pocso court in Bulandshahr sentenced a 45-year-old man to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping his six-year-old niece while he was out on bail in a murder case. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 53,000 on the convict. According to the prosecution, on May 27 last year, the man lured the child with candies to his house and sexually assaulted her. Despite being threatened with death, the child managed to reach home and inform her parents, who immediately took her to a hospital. Special public prosecutor Bharat Sharma said the survivor had to undergo surgery in Meerut due to the severity of her injuries. A case was registered against the man under relevant BNS sections, including rape, voluntarily causing hurt and criminal intimidation, along with sections of the Pocso Act. TNN

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Trains get faster as high-speed tracks zoom 4x in a decade

High-speed tracks in India — which can allow trains to hit speeds above 130kmph — have increased from 5000km in 2014 to over 23,000km now

Potential speed of railway tracks in 2014 and 2026*

*Till Feb 2026; **Source:** Ministry of railways

India, China neighbours that can't be parted: Beijing envoy

Takes Swipe At US, Says Asian Giants' Rise Not Due To Others' Generosity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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Ambassador Xu Feihong said some people were unwilling to see the two neighbours live in harmony. 'They deliberately amplify our differences, hype up the so-called China threat, and hope to profit from discord between our two countries,' he said

New Delhi: Taking a swipe at the US, Chinese ambassador to India **Xu Feihong** said on Thursday that the "remarkable" development witnessed by India and China was built on the hard work and wisdom of their people and not on someone's generosity.

Xu's remarks seemed directed at US deputy secretary of state Christopher Landau's comments earlier that Washington wouldn't make the mistakes with India that it did with China, allowing Beijing to rival the US. External affairs minister S Jaishankar had responded to Landau's remarks by asserting that India's rise would be determined by India alone and not by the mistakes of others.

Addressing the India-China youth dialogue, Xu called for promoting the vision of win-win cooperation between the two countries.

"In recent decades, both China and India have achieved remarkable development. These achievements are built on the hard work and wisdom of our own people, supported by global cooperation, and are by no means the result of others' generosity," said the ambassador.

"Today, both our countries are at a critical stage of development and national rejuvenation. We should achieve development through our own efforts, while actively pursuing mutually beneficial cooperation and supporting each other's success," he added.

Xu went on to say that while India and China were neighbours that could not be parted, some people were unwilling to see the two countries live in harmony.

"They deliberately amplify our differences, hype up the so-called China threat, and hope to profit from discord between our two countries. In the face of a complex and changing landscape, young people should think independently and step out of the information cocoon and help build a more objective and rational understanding between our two peoples," said Xu.

The ambassador also said that in a world of transformation and turbulence, unilateralism and protectionism were on the rise along with hegemonism and power politics prevailed, severely undermining the existing international order.

"As important members of the Global South, China and India should strengthen communication and coordination, jointly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries, and lead the Global South toward greater development," he said.

'Only true religion' claim an insult to others' belief: HC

Rajesh Kumar Pandey | TNN

Prayagraj: Any person in secular India claiming that a particular religion is the "only true" one amounts to insulting other faiths which is an offence under IPC section 295A, Allahabad HC has said.

The section criminalises any deliberate and malicious act intended to outrage religious feelings of any class. Dismissing a petition filed by Reverend Father Vineet Vincent Pereira, who had sought quashing of the charges filed against him under Section 295A, Justice Saurabh Srivastava on March 18 said India was a land where people of all faiths and beliefs lived together under a secular Constitution. "Therefore, it is wrong for any religion to claim that it is the only true religion, as it implies a disparagement of other faiths," the judge said.The HC held the petitioner's act fell within the ambit of IPC section 295A.

According to the FIR, the petitioner conducted prayer meetings where he frequently stated that Christianity was the only true religion. Although the investigation officer concluded that no illegal religious conversion had taken place, police proceeded with the case and filed a chargesheet over allegations of criticising other religions.

Father Vincent argued before the HC that no offence under Section 295A was made out and that the magistrate took cognizance of the chargesheet without applying a judicial mind.

The state contended that the petitioner's claims involved disputed questions of fact and required an appreciation of evidence.

Holding that a prima facie case was made out against the petitioner, the HC found nothing wrong with the magistrate taking cognisance of the chargesheet. At this stage, the court was only required to determine if there was sufficient evidence to suggest an offence had been committed, and not to delve into the merits of the case or the evidence, Justice Srivastava noted.

Stabbed thrice, 54-yr-old Pjb woman fights off intruder

Mohali: A 54-year-old woman in Punjab's Mohali fought off an armed intruder who had allegedly barged into her home on the pretext of delivering a parcel. Stabbed thrice, Sushma Sharma kept grappling with the intruder, grabbed him by the neck and hurled him down. Dazed and bruised, the attacker fled but was caught Thursday as he had dropped his mobile phone during the scuffle.

The intruder also had what looked like a gun but, with her daughter-in-law and seven-year-old grandson to protect, backing down was not an option, said Sushma.

The robber arrived at the house Tuesday, posing as a delivery agent. Sushma's unsuspecting grandson opened the gate, allowing the man to walk in. As soon as he stepped inside, he brandished a "pistol-like weapon" in one hand and a knife in the other, said Sushma, a widow. "Without thinking twice, I caught hold of him," she recounted from her hospital bed.

What followed was a fierce, hand-to-hand fight. She grabbed the attacker's weapon-hand with one hand and clutched his neck with the other. Screaming for help, she went toe to toe, refusing to let him overpower her. Sushma's resistance unnerved the attacker, who broke free and scampered out, leaving behind his helmet and mobile phone. TNN

Girl,7, found dead in flour container in tenant's room

Mohd Dilshad & Punit Lal | TNN

Agra: A seven-year-old girl who went missing on Tuesday afternoon was found dead inside a flour container in their tenant's room on the first floor of the house in Agra's Tajganj area on Wednesday night. Tenant Sunil Kumar, 35, who worked in the shoe unit owned by the girl's father Dinesh Kumar, is absconding.

The girl's uncle Rajesh said Sunil had been living there for two years and often took the child out. However, he had not paid rent for the past five months, prompting the family to lock the room and ask him to vacate. It was only after he paid Rs 5,000 as part of the dues recently was the room unlocked.

Soon after Pratigya, a Class 1 student, went missing on Tuesday, a complaint was lodged, and an intensive search was launched. With no progress, police suspected Sunil's involvement and broke open his room on Wednesday where they discovered the body.

DCP Syed Ali Abbas said there were no visible injury marks on the body. As news spread, hundreds of angry residents took to the streets and blocked the Fatehabad Road, demanding the immediate arrest of the suspect, who is on the run.

The girl's father alleged that Sunil had lured the child with money and killed her and said the culprit should get death as punishment.

Odisha man gets death for raping 10-year-old, trying to strangle her

Berhampur: A Pocso court awarded the death sentence to a 30-year-old man on Thursday for raping a 10-year-old, brutally assaulting her, and then leaving her for dead in Odisha's Ganjam five years ago. The man lured the girl to an isolated place with chocolate. He raped her, tried to strangle her, and then threw her in a desolate spot thinking she was dead. TNN

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HC refusal leaves Nirav with limited legal options

▶ Continued from page 1

He cannot go to Supreme Court as permission to reopen his extradition appeal was refused at the high court on Wednesday. He could approach the European Court of Human Rights to try and get an injunction under Rule 39 preventing removal. Such requests are granted on an exceptional basis, when applicants would face an imminent risk of irreversible harm.

Barrister Ben Keith, of 5 St Andrew's Hill, told TOI: "The timetable for removal is 28 days from the decision of the HC. This might be delayed by an application to the ECHR, or if there is an ongoing immigration application, or other logistical difficulties. However, it seems that it is likely to be the end of the line."

Nirav's barrister, Edward Fitzgerald KC, had argued that Nirav's appeal against extradition should be reopened after defence middleman Sanjay Bhandari won his appeal on the basis that he would face a real risk of torture at the hands of the investigating bodies in India.

Nirav's reliance on ex-judges' opinions fails in UK high court

Fugitive's 7-Yr Legal Battle Suffers Setback As Extradition Allowed

Pradeep.Thakur
@timesofindia.com

Nirav Modi tried to leverage opinions of Justices Deepak Verma and Markandey Katju to support his case against being returned to India to face law here

New Delhi: UK high court's judgment on Wednesday, rejecting fugitive Nirav Modi's appeal for reopening his case for extradition to India, has put the spotlight again on the fraud-accused deploying 'opinions' furnished by former Supreme Court judges and an ex-Allahabad high court judge to question "no-torture sovereign guarantee" provided by India to secure his extradition for facing trial in the Rs 14,000 crore swindle.

The fugitive tried to leverage opinions of two former Supreme Court judges, Justices Deepak Verma and Markandey Katju, besides a retired judge of the Allahabad high court, Justice Abhay M Thipsay, to support his case.

In the latest case proceedings before the UK high court, Nirav Modi, who is behind bars in London for the last seven years since March 20, 2019, leveraged the opinion of Justice Verma that the sovereign guarantees of India have little consequences for trial court judges and the investigative agencies, which, it claimed, are independent agencies and don't go by the diktat of the state—something that reinforced Modi's argument against being sent back to India.

Significantly, Justice Varma acknowledged that he had given the opinion without "extensively and critically examining all the documents shared by GoI or the legal position in detail due to paucity of time." Yet, the realisation that he had weighed in on a sensitive case without having gone through all the details did not deter him from saying authoritatively: "should the presiding judge deem NM's personal production necessary he would be acting squarely within his jurisdiction to direct such an appearance at any time, notwithstanding the sovereign assurances issued by the ministry of home affairs." He also described as "unprecedented and untried" Indian govt's assurance to the UK court that Modi would be kept before and during the trial in a cell being specially built in Mumbai's Arthur Road prison to save him from any threat.

Retired SC justice's opinion in Modi's support was secured by London-based Boutique Law LLP, the same law firm that had in the past organised similar opinions from Justice Katju, tabled before the Westminster Magistrates Court in London in 2020-21.

Opinions of the retired SC justices were rejected by UK high court and, before that, the Westminster Magistrates Court as they attached no weight to their opinions and oral testimonies against the sovereign guarantees and the evidence produced by the investigative agencies. Justice Thipsay along with Justice Katju had given their opinion in favour of Modi that was cited by his counsel before the Westminster Magistrates Court seeking to stay his extradition.

Justice Katju's held that "primarily on the fact Indian courts have become politicised. He states that in recent years the Supreme Court in India has practically surrendered before the Indian govt and is doing its bidding and is not acting as an independent organ of the state protecting the rights of the people as it was supposed to be and in his view the Indian judiciary has largely surrendered before the political executive".

Rape-accused AAP MLA had escaped to Nepal by road: Cops

Bharat.khanna
@timesofindia.com

Patiala: AAP MLA Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra, arrested in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri late Tuesday night after being on the run for nearly seven months in an alleged rape case, had slipped into Nepal by road to dodge the lookout circular issued for him and then made it to Australia, police sources claimed on Thursday.

Pathanmajra's counsel said the Supreme Court on Wednesday disposed of Pathanmajra's petition for a stay on proclaimed-offender proceedings and protection from arrest, declaring it infructuous after he was apprehended by police.

Pathanmajra, the lawmaker from Sanour, is in four-days police remand where he is being questioned about his assets, how he evaded police for so long, and who aided him in his run from the law. SSP Varun Sharma and SP Vaibhav Chaudhary refused to speak on the probe, citing case sensitivity. Investigative inputs and court records reconstructed the escape trail.

Heroic passenger smashes windows, saves many lives

▶ Continued from page 1

PTI

Police officials inspect the site in Rayavaram village of Markapuram district

The vehicle stopped for an hour at Yerragondapalem, where the crew did minor repairs before resuming the trip.

The Arunachal Pradesh-registered bus operated by Harikrishna Travels was ferrying 41 passengers from Nirmal in neighbouring Telangana to Nellore when the accident occurred. The tipper truck's fuel tank exploded in the clash of metal, triggering the blaze.

Sources said the sensor-operated main bus door got locked after the crash, trapping everyone inside. A few passengers smashed windowpanes and crawled out. Residents of nearby villages pulled out some others to safety. The victims were all towards the rear of the bus.

By the time rescue teams reached the accident site, 14 passengers were dead. Volunteers said the sleeper berths above the seats may have made it doubly difficult for them to get out.

Most of the victims, including a five-month-old boy, were from Kanigiri, Vinjamur and Udayagiri in Nellore district.

The two drivers and an assistant escaped with minor injuries. Officials said some of the injured are critical.

Survivors credited a co-passenger named Balaraju with smashing open an escape route for them, ignoring his own safety. "Had he not broken several windows, many more lives would have been lost," a survivor said.

The bus had taken a lesser-used narrower road instead of the main highway because of business reasons.

The state govt announced Rs 5 lakh compensation for families of each of the victims and Rs 2 lakh each for the injured. PM Narendra Modi sanctioned an additional Rs 2 lakh each in ex gratia to the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for every injured.

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tender & notices

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PUBLIC NOTICE

I hitherto known as H NIKITHA JAIN, Wife of Anand Kumar Dinesh Kumar Gupta, residing at No. 26, 2nd Cross, Hebbal Chinnamma Layout, Cholanagar, RT Nagar Post, Bangalore North. Bangalore, Karnataka - 560032. have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as NIKITHA GUPTA.

It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

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I, Deepa Vittal Rao, mother of minor Sachith Vikram, residing at No. 3933, 1st Cross, VBHCS, Girinagar, BSK 3rd Stage, Bengaluru–560085, have changed my minor child's name from Sachith Vikram to Sachith Kaushik as per affidavit sworn before Notary H. G. Venkataramu dated 12Feb2026

I, RADHA.N . W/o Yadunath.M.V R/o No.33/1, 5th main , Shankar nagar, Mahalakshmi Layout , Bengaluru -96 my name mentioned as Radhamma.N instead of Radha. N for all purposes Affidavit dated 22/08/2016 sworn before the Notary S R Deepa Bangalore.

I, H K VIMALAMBA W/o. Late Nagaraja S residing at No. 137, 4th Cross, GKW Layout, Vijaynagar, Bangalore 560040 have changed my name to VIMALA NAGARAJA vide Affidavit dated 19.12.2025 sworn before notary Deepa M, Bengaluru

I, Kamakshi L W/O Thimmappa R/O H. No. 135/5, 2nd Cross, Manjunath Nagar, Ittamadu Main Road, Bangalore South, P.O. Banashankari 3 Stage, Dist. Bangalore (Karnataka) have changed my name to KAMAKSHAMMA forever.

I, Imtiyaz Khabeer R/o No:80,1st Floor, Lubbay Masjid Street, Commercial Street, Cross,B lore-01 as changed my Name to Kalikut Hyder Imtiyaz Khabeer.

I, SARITA KUMARI, D/o RAJENDRA PRASAD, residing at D1117, ASSETZ 63 DEGREE EAST, BENGALURU -560035, have changed my name to SARITA VERMA

I, Sandeep Girgave s/o Balasaheb Girgave residing at #1, 4th mn Byraveshwarnagar Blore-72 have changed name to Sandeep B Girgave afft date 25/03/26 K Suresh.

I have changed my old name from TANUJ KUMAR To New Name TANUJ KHATTER AS PER AFFIDAVIT

I, Sathish Ammannaya Kankal. Resident of #12, parvathi nilaya opp chaitanya paradise apartment, kodichikkanahalli bangalore 560076.have changed my name to Sateesha Ammannaya k for all the purpose

I, JATHEN KUMAR VIJAYAKUMAR REDDY, Residing at no 346, 5th cross, 4th Main, Kodigehalli, Satish Dhawan Park, Tatanagar, Kodigehalli, Bengaluru-92 have changed my name to JATHEN KUMAR Vide affidavit dated 26-03-2026 Before Notary LEELA BANGALORE.

I, Khairunnisa, wife of T A Usman, aged 65 years, residing at Safia Manzil, Theruvath, Kasargod, Kerala -671122, have changed my name to KHAIRUNNISHA USMAN vide affidavit dated 10/03/2026, sworn before Notary, Bengaluru. Henceforth, I shall be known as KHAIRUNNISHA USMAN for all purposes.

NAME CHANGE NOTICE I, Manoj Srinivas, holder of Indian Passport No. B9739633, residing at 2.8 Skidby House, Taylor Court, Salmon Grove, Hull, HU6 7SW, UK, have changed my name to Arvin Deiyo and shall hereafter be known as Arvin Deiyo for all purposes.

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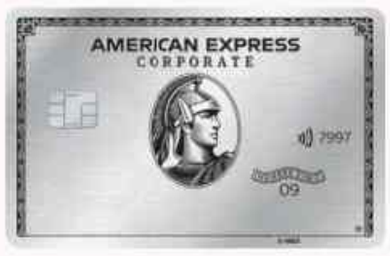

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Iranian wrestler finds opportunity in India amid war

▶ Continued from page 1

Erfan has spent over a year competing across India, including Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra and other states.

Yet, behind the acclaim lies a dark reality from home for the pugilist from Tabriz, capital of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, a region known for its rich wrestling tradition.

Erfan points to the ongoing war as a major disruption to the country's sporting landscape. "Due to the war, local-level competitions have been affected. Many have been cancelled," he said. Erfan rued the shrinking opportunities to compete. "There is no concept of dangal (mud-wrestling) in Iran," he said, explaining his pre-war decision to travel to India, where traditional wrestling remains active and widely followed.

Erfan is currently based in Chandigarh, from where he travels to various wrestling circuits while keeping a close eye on developments in Iran and staying in touch with his family. "They are safe," he said. Erfan's experience in India has been steady. Moving from one bout to another, he continues to compete, adapt and engage with local audiences.

Dowry deaths severe blot on society, HCs mustn't grant bail casually: SC

Dhananjay.Mahapatra
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Wednesday told high courts to be circumspect in exercising discretion to grant bail to the accused in dowry death cases, highlighting that the social evil continues to take the lives of thousands of women.

Cancelling a Patna HC order granting bail to an accused husband, whose wife was murdered within one and a half years of marriage, allegedly because her parents could not meet dowry demands, a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi expressed deep concern over the "seemingly mechanical approach being adopted by the High Courts in granting bail in cases of dowry deaths."

Advocate Samir Ali Khan and Rajnish Kumar, appearing for Bihar govt and mother of the deceased woman, respectively, argued that Patna HC had erred by granting bail despite the accused having been in custody for just one and a half years. They said that HC had not assigned any special reason for granting relief to the man accused of a heinous offence.

The court termed the HC order as "wholly unsustainable" and said, "in a very serious crime like dowry death, the HC should have been very careful in exercising its discretion... The HC lost sight of many important aspects of the matter, more particularly the post-mortem report indicating number of injuries on the body of the deceased, and the presumption of commission of offence as provided under Section 114 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023."

The judges said, "Dowry deaths are indeed a profound disgrace and a major social evil representing a severe violation of human rights and dignity."

Top court flags lack of evidence, delay in dowry harassment case

▶ Continued from page 1

The complainant and the prosecution have failed to put forth any material evidence or substance which supports the allegations contained in the FIR and the chargesheet. A mere statement that the accused/appellants herein frequently demanded dowry and harassed the complainant for the same is not sufficient to initiate criminal proceedings against them..." the bench said.

On a petition filed by the couple and their daughter seeking to quash the case, the court further said the prosecution had failed to provide any sufficient cause for the delay, which casts aspersions on its case. "We find that citizens who allege commission of an offence should not dawdle on their rights but should rather pursue them in real time in order to achieve the ends of justice — vigilantibus non dormientibus jura subveniunt, meaning the law protects those who are vigilant about their rights".

The court emphasised that such delay (or lack thereof) matter in matrimonial cases or criminal cases between spouses because, due to the personal nature of the allegations and the relationship, such cases often lack adequate evidence to prove or disprove the claims.

Why Your IGNOU Degree May Be Rendered Invalid

Univ Continues To Offer Courses 'Barred' In Distance Mode

Sugandha.Jha1
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Renuka, a 42-year-old school teacher from Bhopal's Ujjain and a mother of two, was looking to pursue an MA in psychology alongside her job to upgrade her qualifications.

Like many working professionals, she turned to IGNOU for its flexibility — and paid around Rs 9,000 as first-year fees. What she did not know was that the course she applied for had already been barred in distance mode under national norms last year.

However, the university continues to admit students to the programme, despite it being discontinued for online and distance learning under UGC directions issued in line with the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021, which mandates in-person clinical and practical training for such courses.

Her case has brought to light an apparent violation of regulatory norms, potentially leaving thousands of applicants in a fix as they may have enrolled in a programme that could ultimately be deemed invalid.

Around 17,000 students have applied for the MA psychology course this year, according to officials.

Having taken admission in July last year (after the ban), Renuka said she has been attending online classes since Sept, receiving regular communication from the study centre. "I have already completed assignments and they have even shared the exam schedule for this June," she said.

"I found out through a news report that such courses have been barred in online mode. There are around 190 students in my class. We tried asking the regional centre, but its officials said they had no such information. We also emailed IGNOU, but got no response," she said, adding, "Now I don't know whether to even submit my assignments if the degree itself may not be valid."

A STUDENT SAYS

I found out through a news report that such courses have been barred in online mode. We emailed IGNOU, but got no response

Last year, UGC directed institutions to halt fresh enrolments in healthcare-related courses requiring clinical and practical training in online and distance modes from the July-Aug 2025 academic cycle — including psychology, nutrition, microbiology and biotechnology — warning that degrees obtained in violation of these norms would be rendered invalid.

According to the university's official admission brochure, applications continue to be invited for these programmes despite the restrictions. The brochure carries a disclaimer stating that under the NCAHP Act, allied and healthcare qualifications are recognised only if obtained through regular mode, and advises applicants to go through the provisions before taking admission and make an "informed decision".

REGISTRAR SAYS

We have placed a disclaimer so that students can go through the provisions and take an informed decision

This year, IGNOU has continued to invite applications to other programmes in disciplines where online and distance offerings are restricted by regulators, including courses in areas like medicine, agriculture and horticulture.

The MA psychology programme continues to attract 16,000 to 17,000 applicants each year and remains one of IGNOU's flagship courses, according to registrar (student registration division) V P Rupam.

The decision to continue offering the programme was taken by the university's Academic Council, he said.

"A majority of our students pursue such courses for academic interest and not for clinical practice. The NCAHP regulations apply to professional registration, so the restriction does not fully apply in this context," Rupam argued.

He also pointed out that certain exemptions are available to IGNOU under ODL regulations.

On concerns over the degree's validity for those seeking career opportunities, Rupam acknowledged the issue but said the directive had created "undesirable" constraints for students dependent on distance learning. "You see, because of this directive, such students are now unable to opt for NET, JRF or pursue further qualifications," he said.

Addressing worries over ongoing admissions, he added, "The university will continue to offer the degree to those enrolled last year, and no admissions will be cancelled."

TOI reached out to UGC secretary Manish R Joshi but there was no immediate response.

ಡಾ. ಮನಮೋಹನ್ ಸಿಂಗ್ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ

Dr. MANMOHAN SINGH BENGALURU CITY UNIVERSITY

Office of the Registrar, Central College Campus, Dr. B.R Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru – 560 001. E-mail: registrar@bcu.ac.in

Tender No: BCU/2025-26/IND0025 Date: 25-03-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPPP portal only)

Name of the work	Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Secure Wired and Wireless Networking & RF Connectivity at Bangalore City University, Central College Campus, Bengaluru
EMD	**Rs. 11,50,000/-**
Last date for queries	**30.03.2026 Up to 16.30 hrs.**
Pre Bid meeting date and place	**01.04.2026 at 15.00 hrs Registrar's Office, Administrative Block, Central College Campus. Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, Bengaluru**
Last date for submission of Tender	**17.04.2026 Up to 16.00hrs.**
Opening of the Technical Bid	**18.04.2026 at 16.30 hrs.**

Note: Payment of Tender processing fee and EMD amount as per E-procurement Portal.

DIPR/CP/6465/SSC/2025-26 Sd/- Registrar

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Reg. Office: 30/1, 3rdFloor, UNI Building, Thimmaiah Road, Millers Tank Bund Area, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru- 560051 E-mail : dgm4bswml25@gmail.com

No. DGM-4/ BSWML/ Tend/ 08/ 2025-26 Date:26.03.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT) (Through GOK KPPP only)

1) The Deputy General Manager-4, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited on behalf of the Managing Director, BSWML, Bengaluru invites fresh proposals from eligible bidders for the works detailed in the table below. The Bidders may submit tenders for works given in the table through KPPP portal of the Government of Karnataka (viz. https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) The Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the instructions to bidders to qualify for award of the contract. **2)** Tender documents may be downloaded from the KPP portal of the Government of Karnataka from 30.03.2026. **3)** Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.

Sl. No.	Name of the works	Approximate Amount put to tender including GST (in lakhs)	EMD Amount (in Rs)
1	Construction of New Public Toilets and Upgradation of Existing public Toilets in East and Yelahanka Zone with Operation & Maintenance for a period of 1 Year.	929.41	Rs. 13,94,116/-

Calendar of Events: 1. Availability of RFP Document from **30.03.2026 up at 16.00 Hrs onwards. 2.** Last Date for Receipt of Queries **07.04.2026 up to 15.00 Hrs. 3.** Date of Pre bid meeting at the office of Chief General Manager-2 BSWML on **07.04.2026 at 15.30 Hrs. 4.** Last Date for receipt of Tenders is **15.04.2026 at 16.00 Hrs. 5.** Date of Opening of Technical bids are on **16.04.2026 by 16.30 Hrs. 6.** Opening of Financial bids Will be intimated to technically qualified bidders.

DIPR/CP/6476/NR/2025-26 Sd/- Deputy General Manager-4, BSWML

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www.sims-shimoga.com Ph : 08182–229933,264199 Fax: 08182 264100

No: SIMS/UC/Tender/2025-26 ದಿನಾಂಕ:24/03/2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through e procurement)

Sl. No	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Item	Publish, Duration, End, Date and time.
1	No: SIMS/Tender/Radiology/ 1452964/2025-26 Date: 17-03-2026	Tender For Tele reporting Service of CT & MRI Scans To Radiology Department Sims	From: 25-03-2026 to 08-04-2025 at 5.00 PM.
2	No: SIMS/Tender/Radiology/ 1452964/2025-26 Date: 17-03-2026	Tender For the Supply of Equipment spares To Workshop Department Sims	From: 25-03-2026 to 08-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
3	No: SIMS/MGPS/UC/2025-26/2094196 Dated: 19/03/2026	Tender for the Maintenance of Medical Gas pipeline systems & Others to SIMS.	From: 25-03-2026 to 08-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
4	No: SIMS/U.C/Pest Control/2025-26/2084429 Dated:19/03/2026	Pest Control Services At Teaching Mc. Gann Hospital Sims Shivamogga	From: 25-03-2026 to 08-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
5	No. SIMS/TNDR/ Vehicle Parking/2025-26/1924377 Dt-19-03-2026	Tender For Parking Service To SIMS Campus.	From: 25 03 2026 to 08-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
6	Re-Tender No. SIMS/EST-2/ College Lab Chemical &reagents/ 2025-26, Dated: 18/03/25.	Re-Tender For the Supply of College Lab Chemicals & Reagents To SIMS Shivamogga.	From: 25-03-2026 to 09-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
7	Re-Tender No. SIMS/EST-2/ Central Lab Chemical & reagents/2025-26,Dated:18/03/26	Re-Tender For the Supply of Central Lab Chemicals & Reagents To SIMS Shivamogga	From: 25-03-2026 to 09-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.
8	Re- Tender No. SIMSABNK/ EQP/13/2025-26, Dated: 24.03.2026.	Re-Tender For the Supply of Equipments & Instruments To SIMS Shivamogga.	From: 02-04-2026 to 17-04-2026 at 5.00 PM.

Opening of all above Tenders can be obtained through e-procurement from the tendering website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/kppp Further bidders can take assistance with e-procurement help desk at: 080-25501216, 25501227

Sd/- Director/Dean
Shimoga Institute of Medical Sciences, Shivamogga.

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Website: http://rwf.indianrailways.gov.in

EOI No.RWF/WS/SMS/25-26/01 dt.26/03/2026

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR DISPOSAL OF FUME DUST

Rail Wheel Factory(RWF) located at Yelahanka Banglore-560064, invites EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) for the following activity.

Name of the work : Safe Disposal /recycle/reuse of Non- Hazardous waste item- Fume Dust generated at Steel Melting Shop. Fume dust shall be provided free of cost. The transportation and handling charges shall be borne by firm. **Purpose of calling this EOI :** Through this EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI), RWF invites proposal from authorized CPCB/KSPCB recyclers, co-processor reputed organization for Safe Disposal /recycle/reuse Non-Hazardous waste item- Fume Dust. **Location :** Inside Factory premises of RWF. **Last date of submission : 13/04/2026.** Firm may inspect and offer Expression of Interest.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/Melting

For detail, contact :
Dy. CME/Melting - 9108501450
AWM/SMS - 9108501426
Email- awm.sms@rwf.railnet.gov.in

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबंधक, यूनिट –01 कन्सट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसेज

उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय)
(उ0 प्र0 सरकार का उपक्रम)

कार्यालय पताः- भवन सं0–6, कृष्णा कुटीर व्हाईट हाउस, फेज–2, वीरास्वामी रेड्डी ले–आउट के समीप, कांदुगोडी, बैंगलुरु। Mob. No. 7379017520
e-mail : cdsunit01@gmail.com

पत्रांकः 342/एम–6/82
दिनांकः 24.03.2026

ई-निविदा सूचना

उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय), की ओर से अधोहस्ताक्षरी द्वारा **Construction of Central Covered Courtyard Works at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Ramanagra, Distt.-Ramanagra (Karnataka)** अनु. लागत ₹ **90.13 लाख** हेतु दिनांक **03.04.2026** की अपरान्ह **05:00 बजे** तक ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की जाती है। उक्त कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक **26.03.2026** से दिनांक **03.04.2026** के मध्य उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की **e-procurement** की वेबसाइट **https://etender.up.nic.in** से डाउनलोड किये जा सकते है तथा ई-निविदा दिनांक **04.04.2026** को अपरान्ह **01:00 बजे** कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-01, सी. एण्ड डी.एस., उ.प्र. जल निगम (नगरीय), भवन सं.-6, कृष्णा कुटीर व्हाईट हाउस, फेज-2, वीरास्वामी रेड्डी ले-आउट के समीप, कांदुगोडी, बैंगलुरु खोली जायेंगी। ई-निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य ₹5,000+GST (18%) अतिरिक्त देय होगा। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत विवरण विभाग की वेबसाइट **www.cdsupjn.org** एवं प्रोक्योरमेन्ट पोर्टल **https://etender.up.nic.in** पर उपलब्ध है।

समस्त शुद्धि पत्र **(Corrigendum) https://etender.up.nic.in** पर ही अपलोड किये जायेंगे, इनका पृथक से कोई प्रकाशन नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदादाताओं को सलाह दी जाती है, कि वे उक्त वेबसाईट का समय-समय पर अवलोकन करते रहें।

GOVERNMENT OF GUJARAT,
N.W. R. W. S. & KALPSAR DEPT.
"E" procurement Notice No. SBD-3 of 2026

Name of the work.:- Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract for providing irrigation water for filling of various ponds/water bodies (34 villages) of Wankaner Taluka, District Morbi through pipeline by lifting water from L3P3 (near L3P3 pumping station) including supplying and laying MS and H.D.P.E pipeline of different dia with all allied works etc. Complete including operation and maintenance of the commissioned project for 10 years.

Estimated Cost of the Work:- Rs. 159,82,84,796=77 (Excluding G.S.T)

- Last date for down loading bid documents: - **Up to Dt.24/04/2026 Upto 17.00 Hrs.**
- Last date of online submission:- **Up to Dt.24/04/2026 up to 18.00 Hrs.**
- Last date for physical submission of Documents from **Dt.27/04/2026 to Dt.04/05/2026 during office Hrs.**
- Date & place for Site Visit: **Dt.06/04/2026 @ 9.00 Hrs.** At. Chotila.
- Date & Place for Pre-Bid Meeting: **Dt. 15/04/2026 @ 12.00 Hrs** At. Committee Hall Block No.9, 4th floor, NWRWS & K.. Deptt. New Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar.
- 'Date of online opening (Pre-qualification Bid only) :- **Dt. 27/04/2026 at 12.00 Hrs.** at the S.E., R.I.P.C., 2/5 Jilla Seva Sadan-2, Rajkot Office.

(Any further corrigendum if required will be done online only)

Name & Address of **Superintending Engineer,** Rajkot Irrigation Project Circle, 2/5-Jilla Seva Sadan No.2, Race Course Road. Rajkot-360001. Phone No. (0281)-2443680, Fax No. (0281)-2453161. & **Executive Engineer,** Sauni Yojana Division, 4/5-Jilla Seva Sadan No.2, Race Course Road, Rajkot-360001 Phone No. (0281)-2443231

Further details can be seen on **www.gujaratinformation.gujarat.gov.in** and **http://tender.nprocure.com**

Note: - Any corrigendum hereafter will be published directly on website.

MAHITI/RAJ/2036/25-26

कार्यालय नगर निगम जयपुर
(पण्डित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय भवन, लालकोठी, टोंक रोड़, जयपुर–15)

क्रमांक :– जसअ/2025/565 दिनांक: 24.03.2026

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना सं. अधि0 अभि0 (मु0) 127 से 129/2025-26

केन्द्र एवं राज्य सरकार के सभी विभागों में पंजीकृत उपयुक्त श्रेणी के ठेकेदारों एवं नगर निगम के पंजीकृत निविदादाताओं से बिड अधि0 अभि0 (मु0) से सम्बन्धित ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्यों की अनुमानित लागत, टेण्डर बेचे जाने तथा प्राप्त करने की तारीख, टेण्डर शर्त आदि सम्पूर्ण विवरण नगर निगम जयपुर की वेबसाईट **www.jaipurmc.org.com, eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** एवं State Public Procurement Portal Government of Rajasthan की वेबसाईट **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** के **UBN No:- JMC2526WSOB02981, JMC2526WSOB02982** एवं **JMC2526WSOB02983** पर देखी जा सकती है।

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नगर निगम जयपुर

राज.संवाद / सी / 25 / 23297

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

E-Tender No.	Approx Cost	Earnest Money
JHS-ENGG-N-2026-55	166872905.50	3337500.00

Description of work: Balance work for- Jhansi Division: VGLJ-STLI section: Providing and erecting "W" metal cattle barrier along the track to prevent CRO in remaining portion under ADEN/Line/JHS sub division.

Date of closing Tender: 16.04.2026 at 15:00 hrs.

Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 05 Months

• Tender online can be submitted up to **15:00 hrs** on **16.04.2026**. • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in**.

667/26 (ADM)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

THE HUTTI GOLD MINES COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Hutti-584115, Raichur Dist, Karnataka State, Tele: **08537-275463, 276339**
e-Mail: **material276339@gmail.com,** Website: **www.huttigold.karnataka.gov.in**

TENDER NOTIFICATION No. 37/25-26 Dt: 27.03.2026 (Through KPP Portal only)

Tender is invited by "The I/c. Dy. General Manager (Materials)" for the following Tenders as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Description	EMD in Rs.
1	Supply of Refined Sunflower Oil. **HGML/2025-26/IND0459**	56,000/-
2	Supply of Sona Masuri Rice. **HGML/2025-26/IND0460**	78,000/-
3	Supply of Crusher and SAG and Ball Mill Plant Conveyor Belts. **HGML/2025-26/IND0417**	1,22,000/-
4	Supply of TC Drill Steel Grinding Machine. **HGML/2025-26/IND0388**	45,000/-
5	Supply of Pneumatic torque wrench. **HGML/2025-26/IND0414/CALL-2**	26,000/-
6	Construction of parking shed at KV staff quarters. **HGML/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT134**	25,000/-
7	Renovation of CGU Guest House. **HGML/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT127/CALL-2**	29,000/-

Calendar of events: (1) Last date for receipt of tender: **10.04.2026 at 4.00 PM.**
(2) Opening of Technical Bid on: **13.04.2026 at 10.00 AM.**

For further details interested bidders are advised to log on to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPP Portal.

Sd/- I/c. Dy. General Manager (Materials)

"LEADING GOLD PRODUCER IN INDIA"

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

For and on behalf of President of India, the Chief Engineer/RSP & GS, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 invites e-tender for the following work. Following tender has been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** & the tender will be closed at 15:00 Hrs. on due date : **e-Tender Notice No. : CE-Con-RSP-02-2026; Closing Date :** By 15:00 hrs. (IST) on 14.04.2026; **Brief Description of Works:** Construction of full Road Over Bridge (ROB proper over Rly Track and both approaches) in Lieu of (i) LC-136 (1x54.0m Bow String Girder+1x36.0m Composite Girder+1x18.0m Composite Girder+11x24.0m T-Beam Girder+3x12.0m T-Beam Girder) at Km 239/17-19 in between Asanbani Tatanagar Station on Asanbani-Gobindpur Road (ii) LC-137 (1x18.0m Composite Girder+1x24.0m Composite Girder+1x36.0m Composite Girder+3x24.040m PSC Girder +1x20.950m RCC Slab+1x30.0m Composite Girder+19x24.040m PSC Girder) at Km 242/23-25 between stations Asanaboni Station - Salgajhari Station (iii) LC-138 (5x24.040m PSC Girder+2x37.280m Composite Girder+1x19.080m Composite Girder +1x52.08m Bow String Girder +1x28.596m PSC Girder +2x37.28m Composite Girder +11x24.040m PSC Girder) at Km 242/23-25 between stations Asanaboni Station-Salgajhari Station under Chakradharpur Railway Division in South Eastern Railway. **Approx. Cost :** ₹ 195.21 Crore; **Bid Security:** Rs 99.1 Lakhs; **Period of completion :** 24 months from the date of issue of LOA; Interested tenders may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/ description/specification of the tenders and submit their Bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **NB:** "Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders." **(PR-1349)**

25001/363/2526

By E_Mail/e-Despatch
E_Mail ID : serw_balasore@yahoo.in
Ph-No-06782/260318
Balia, Balasore

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE
"e" Procurement Notice for Bridge Works
Identification No. - Online Tender - Bridge NCB No. 64 of 2025-26
Letter No 1514/WE Date : 20.03.2026

1. Name of the work : **Bridge Works**
2. Total No. of Works : As per Annexure
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure
4. Eligible Class of Contractor : As per Annexure
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender on-line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender in O/O C.C.E.,R.W. Circle, Balasore	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Balasore	**NCB No. 64 of 2025-26**	31.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	16.04.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	15.04.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	17.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated latter

- Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Er. Durjyodhan Behera
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. Circle, Balasore

OIPR - 25001/25105/1/25-26/0009

34001/268/2526

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail: ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CE-Roads-I-23/2025-26

1. The Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in double cover system through ONLINE MODE form eligible contractors for Roadwork as mentioned below:
2. Nature of work : Road works
3. No. of work : 4 Nos.
4. Tender Paper cost : Rs.10,000.00
5. Class of Contractor : 'A' Class/Special Class / Super Class
6. Available of bid document the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 30.03.2026 to 5.30 PM of 17.04.2026
7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt.18.04.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tenderodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha
OIPR-34001/34117/1/25-26/0045

Amul

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CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul KOOL

MUMBAI INDIANS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM | Amul KOOL

GUJARAT TITANS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM | Amul KOOL

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

PUNJAB KINGS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM | Amul KOOL

LSG

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul

DELHI CAPITALS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

BENGALURU CHAMPIONS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

MUMBAI INDIANS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

DELHI CAPITALS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

GUJARAT GIANTS

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

UP WARRIORZ

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Amul PROTEIN | Amul ICE CREAM

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Get **10% off*** on the Amul Protein range, only on the Amul Shop app.

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Cong is BJP's B-team, Rahul lacks maturity: Kerala CM

Accuses Gandhi Of Weakening Oppn Unity In Key Contests

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Congress has "degenerated into BJP's B-team" and party MP Rahul Gandhi lacks the political maturity expected of even a local-level functionary, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said Thursday, sharpening the election battle in the state.

BATTLEGROUND KERALA

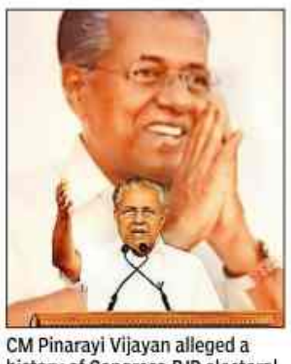
"Rahul is a national leader but doesn't have the understanding and knowledge of even an ordinary party worker. 'Kandalum kondalum padikkilla' (won't learn from seeing and experiencing)," the CPM veteran said at a news conference in Kothamangalam, alleging Gandhi's role in helping BJP win elections in multiple states.

He accused Gandhi of weakening opposition unity in key contests, alleging Congress actions helped BJP win Delhi, Haryana and Bihar. Gandhi's refusal to align with other non-BJP parties in Delhi benefited BJP, Vijayan said, adding similar divisions in Haryana and Bihar tilted outcomes in BJP's favour.

"We can't understand how a person whom all Congressmen consider an honourable leader can degenerate in such a way," Vijayan said, while accusing Congress of acting as BJP's proxy.

Vijayan alleged Congress had backed moves that led to legal action against AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and demanded his arrest when a cabinet colleague was jailed. Kejriwal's subsequent acquittal was a setback for both BJP and Congress, he said.

Vijayan also alleged a history of Congress-BJP electoral understanding in Kerala, citing past contests against EMS Namboodiripad in Pattambi and AK Gopalan in Palakkad, and more recent examples in Vadakara, Beypore, Thrissur and Nemom. He claimed an RSS functionary had once told Congress brass that support from the saffron camp in dozens of seats helped a Congress politician hold the CM's post.



CM Pinarayi Vijayan alleged a history of Congress-BJP electoral understanding in Kerala, citing past contests against EMS Namboodiripad in Pattambi and AK Gopalan in Palakkad, and recent examples in Vadakara, Beypore, Thrissur and Nemom

Turning to the poll watchdog, Vijayan criticised Election Commission over a directive to police to act against social media posts linked to a document bearing BJP's Kerala unit seal. He called the appearance of the seal on an EC document "unbelievable" and sought intervention by the chief election commissioner, demanding details of the probe be made public. "Not allowing criticism is not right in a democratic system," he said, adding police action followed EC directions and was no longer under his control.

CPM and Congress share space in the national opposition bloc, but their contest in Kerala remains sharply adversarial despite broader anti-BJP alignment at the national level. CPM-led Left Democratic Front and Congress-led United Democratic Front have long been locked in a direct, bipolar fight in the state, with each seeking to undercut the other's credibility and electoral base.

No shortage of oil and gas, won't impose curbs: Govt

Atul.Mathur@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Govt on Thursday ruled out the possibility of imposing restrictions on sale of petrol and diesel, saying there was no shortage of oil and gas and refiners were tying up additional imports.

India is an oasis of energy security, supplying refined fuel to over 150 countries, and domestic petrol and diesel availability is structurally assured, govt said. "All one lakh-plus retail fuel outlets in the country are open and dispensing fuel without interruption. Not a single outlet has been asked to ration supply," it said. Govt added that two months of oil supplies and one month of LPG requirements are already available with the country.

"India's petroleum and LPG supply situation is fully secure and under control. All retail fuel outlets have enough supplies. There is no shortage of petrol, diesel, or LPG anywhere in the country," the petroleum ministry said in a statement.

The assertion came amid steps taken by different countries to control fuel supply by raising prices, rationing supplies, imposing odd-even vehicle restrictions, shutting fuel stations, or declaring a national energy emergency, and speculation in certain quarters that India could also be forced to follow suit. There have been reports of fuel shortages in a few areas. Rumours of impending lockdowns, amid the squeeze on energy supplies from West Asia due to the ongoing military conflict, have also led to people queuing up at filling stations in some cities.

FUEL BUFFER

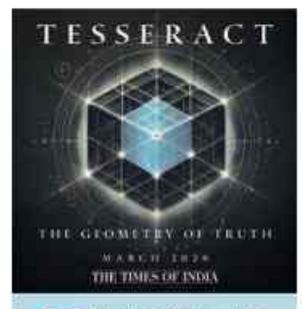
- Crude and refined products available for **60** days
- Additional crude stocks secured for **2** months
- LPG supply available for **1** month
- Additional LPG cargo of **800,000** tonnes en route
- Domestic LPG production ramped up to **50,000** tonnes a day

The ministry said these were isolated instances, triggered by "deliberate misinformation" spread through social media. It urged people not to fall for a "mischievous, coordinated campaign", and said claims of a lockdown and fuel rationing were "bogus and fabricated".

Dependent on imports for its domestic energy needs, particularly from West Asia, govt said alternative arrangements have been made from other geographies to avoid any supply gap. India imports nearly 90% of its crude requirement, 60% of LPG and more than half of its natural gas. Of the total reserve capacity of 74 days, the actual availability — including crude, refined products and strategic cavern storage — is about 60 days.

"Nearly two months of steady supply is available for every Indian citizen, regardless of what happens globally. The next two months of crude procurement have also been secured," the ministry said. It added that oil companies have increased credit to petrol pumps from one day to three days to ensure there is no disruption due to working capital constraints.

Govt also said India has diversified its crude sourcing to 41 countries and higher volumes were now coming from the western hemisphere, compensating for any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz. It has also ramped up domestic LPG production by 40% to 50,000 tonnes a day, meeting about 60% of the daily requirement. It added that 800,000 tonnes of assured inbound cargoes were en route from the US, Russia, Australia and other countries. It said transforming LPG connections to piped gas is part of a long-term strategy to shift to a cheaper, cleaner and safer fuel, and began well before the current situation.



Meera Jain deserves our gratitude and admiration for the opportunity that the people of Mumbai have been given to experience Tesseract through the extraordinary historical lens of The Times of India. It is far more than an exhibition or an experience. It is a profound journey through memory, meaning, and modernity. By drawing upon the living archive of an iconic newspaper, a bridge has been created between history and the future, between recorded truth and emerging possibility.

What moved me most is the underlying idea that shines through this effort: The Geometry of Truth. In an age increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, speed, and digital abstraction, this theme feels not only relevant, but essential. Truth has structure. Truth has symmetry. Truth has depth. And when explored with imagination and responsibility, it can guide us beyond technology toward something far more important — human oneness.

That, to me, is the enduring power of Tesseract. It does not merely interpret the world through AI; it reminds us that the highest purpose of intelligence, artificial or otherwise, is to bring humanity closer to itself.

Tesseract brings together vision, courage, and a commitment to creating something timely, thoughtful and elevating. Mumbai is richer for this gift.

— Shailesh Haribhakti
RENOWNED CA AND INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR IN TOP COMPANIES

12L of 60L Bengal names under adjudication purged from poll rolls

▸ Continued from page 1

That means approximately 12 lakh of the 60 lakh names under adjudication are already out of the rolls. EC is still to announce when voters whose names have been deleted from the rolls can appeal. "Those who have been excluded will have to wait a few more days to file their appeals," the official said.

Appellate tribunals constituted on March 21 have not started functioning yet.

"The state earmarked four locations for appeals, which we shared with Calcutta HC. The court suggested we use the Judicial Academy in New Town. Officials from the HC, state govt and EC will visit the academy on Friday, after which the HC will decide where hearings will be held," the official said, adding the court would also decide the number of tribunal locations.

The 15-day deadline printed on every page of the supplementary list — "Any person aggrieved may prefer an appeal within 15 days" — has left deleted voters confused.

The list was published at midnight March 23. The deadline is April 7. Three days later, no one knows where to file.

Birju Sonkar, a resident of Kolkata's Burrabazar, said four out of seven family members had their claims rejected during judicial adjudication. They had voted since 2013. "Our local BLO told me that we cannot vote," he said.

An EC official said tribunals would re-examine cases disposed of by judicial officers. Since all relevant documents are part of case records, appellants won't need to submit any additional papers.

I'll work as a poll official but my own voter status would prick me: Teacher

▸ Continued from page 1

Ironically, most of his family members have their names on the electoral rolls.

A similar predicament confronts S K Tohidul Islam, a veteran polling officer from Oari in East Burdwan — the birthplace of freedom fighter Batukeswar Dutt. Despite years of service in election duties, he now finds himself excluded from the voter list. "At the time of the (SIR) hearing, I submitted my passport. Yet, my name is under adjudication," he said.

The paradox extends to administrative officials. Md Zakaria, the BDO of Khanakul-II, will oversee key election operations in the region. However, his own voting status remains uncertain. "My name was there in the 2002 voter list. As I perform my poll duty, I don't know whether my name will be cleared or not," he said.

In East Burdwan's Khandaghosh constituency, Sheikh Minhaj Uddin, a primary school teacher and BLO, faces a similar situation. While 10 members of his family were initially placed under adjudication and later cleared, his name continues to remain in limbo.

Md Samsuddin, a teacher at Kumarhat High School, echoed the frustration. Despite assurances from the Electoral Registration Officer that his name had been cleared, it still appears under adjudication.

"As I will be busy undergoing training as a poll official, my own voting right would prick like a thorn in the flesh," he said.

Modi to meet CMs today on W Asia conflict preparedness

New Delhi: PM **Narendra Modi** will interact with CMs, excluding those from poll-bound states, to review preparedness and plans to deal with the fallout of the West Asia conflict, amid concerns over energy supplies.

Official sources said the video-conference will focus on synergy among states and UTs in the spirit of "Team India". However, CMs of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, and the UT of Puducherry, will not join due to the Model Code of Conduct. The cabinet secretariat will separately engage their chief secretaries.

Since the US and Israel went to war against Iran on Feb 28, Modi has emphasised preparedness to tackle adverse outcomes, particularly related to imports of oil and fertilisers, while cautioning against panic and asserting adequate fuel supply.

He has addressed the issue in both Houses of Parliament, and govt held an all-party meet to brief political parties. Modi has also urged states to crack down on black-marketing of LPG cylinders and prevent hoarding of oil and fuel. TNN

India receives 27–30 LPG tankers every mth in normal times

▸ Continued from P1

Once these ships reach Indian ports and discharge the load, they can be sent to pick new consignments," said the official. "Few of the 20 Indian-flagged vessels in this region are not bound for India but other ports," the official added.

The 18 LPG tankers are waiting to enter the strait to pick up cooking gas from Gulf nations, officials said.

Iran's decision to green flag ships headed for India marks a success for New Delhi's diplomacy, with PM Modi holding two rounds of talks with Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian. Modi had asserted that the blockade of the strait (by Iran) was unacceptable. External affairs minister S Jaishankar had also contacted his Iranian counterpart Araghchi with the same request.

India's inclusion in the group that Tehran called "friendly" came as a surprise. Two of the five "friendly countries" mentioned — Russia and China — are seen by Iran as partners in its fight against the US and Israel. The remaining two are the Islamic countries of Turkiye and Pakistan, with the latter anxiously trying to play the intermediary between the Trump administration and the Iranian leadership.

Jaishankar and Abbas Araghchi

India, in normal times, gets around 27-30 LPG tankers every month to meet domestic requirements as it imports 60% of its cooking gas, with 85-90% of this being sourced from Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE. To meet the shortfall, govt is sourcing cooking gas from the US, Argentina, Norway, Canada and Russia, and some cargo has already reached Indian ports through other sea routes. Two LPG vessels — Shivalik and Nanda Devi — reached India last week, while Pine Gas and Jag Vasant are likely to reach this week.

India can engage all sides in West Asia conflict: Rijiju

New Delhi: India remains one of the few countries that is able to engage with all sides in West Asia conflict, parliamentary affairs minister **Kiren Rijiju** said on Thursday, defending the govt's diplomatic approach and rejecting Opposition claims that India has become a bystander in the crisis.

"If our ships are passing through the Strait of Hormuz and continue to move safely, that itself shows India's position. Our PM has spoken to the US President, Israeli PM, Iranian President and leaders of Gulf countries. Very few leaders in the world can speak to all sides," Rijiju said. TNN

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM SMART CITY CORPORATION LIMITED (GVSCCL), VISAKHAPATNAM

T.N.No: GVSCCL/Admin/380(Office Building)/2024-25; Dt: 26/03/2026

01. No. of Works	: 1 (One)
02. Value of Works (ECV)	: Rs.2.27 Crores
03. Downloading Starting Date	: 26-03-2026 @ 8.00 PM
04. Downloading End Date	: 13-04-2026 @ 3.00 PM
05. Last date for Submission of bid	: 13-04-2026 @ 4.00 PM

Further details at http://www.apeprocurement.gov.in
O/o the Superintending Engineer (Smart City)
Contact No.: 9848308824
Sd/- MD & CEO, GVSCCL

Bank fraud: CBI files case against 2 ex-Reliance Telecom directors

New Delhi: CBI has registered a case against former Reliance Telecom directors Satish Seth and Gautam Doshi, besides some public servants, on a complaint filed by State Bank of India alleging a bank fraud of Rs 115 crore.

The agency conducted searches at their residences in Mumbai in this connection. Documents connected with the loan transactions have been recovered. Reliance Telecom has also been named as an accused in the case. TNN

Bi-RIDE
BENGALURU INTEGRATED RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE LIMITED
BENGALURU SUBURBAN TRANSPORT PROJECT (BSTP)

Website: www.kride.in | Email ID: gmprocurement@kride.in

e-TENDER NOTICE Date:26.03.2026

Tender Notice No.: **Bi-RIDE/ PMIS/01/2026**
Tender ID: **2026_KRIDE_271960_1**
"Design, Supply and Implementation of Project Management Information System (PMIS) for Civil, Electrical and System Works of Bengaluru Suburban Transport Project (BSTP) and other projects."
Last date for submission of bids is **27.04.2026, IST 15:00 Hrs,** for details visit **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app**

DIPR/CP/6473/Gen/2025-26 Sd/- **GENERAL MANAGER /Procurement**

KridePrm Kride Bsrp kride_bsrp KRIDE,BSRP

Govt. of Karnataka
Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society, Bengaluru
(An Organisation of Government of Karnataka)
No.8, MSB-1, 6th & 7th Floor, Karnataka Marketing Federation Building, Cunningham Road, Bengaluru-560052.

No: KREIS/INFR/OTH/269/2025-ADMN/268706 Date: 26.03.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through e-Procurement Only)

Tenders have been invited on 18.03.2026 for **Supply of Gas Steam Boiler with Vessels to Mysore Division Residential Schools / Colleges functioning under the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society across Karnataka,** through e-Portal vide Indent No. **KREIS/2025-26/IND0092** and the last date for receipt of tenders is **17.04.2026.** The details may be viewed in the **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** website.

Sd/- Joint Director (Admin) and Tender Inviting Authority, KREIS

DIPR/CP/YC/6479/2025-26

BANGALORE MYSORE INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR AREA PLANNING AUTHORITY
No.5, Second Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560009
Ph: 080-22341230/35, E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No:BMICAPA/CLU-03/99/2025-26/2908 Date: 26.03.2026

PUBLICATION
(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Sri D.Krishna S/o Late K.M.Dasegowda has applied to this Authority seeking Change of land use from"Agriculture" Zone to "Commercial" purpose pertaining to Sy.No:139/1 extent of 00Acre-32Guntas of Taripura Village, Kasaba Hobli, Srirangapatna Taluk, Mandya District under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961. The foresaid land is reserved for Agriculture zone in approved Master plan. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following;

1) By developing the Commercial Projects in the above said land, the general public will get jobs.
2) During the development works of the layout there will be opportunity of employment for labourers.
3) Surrounding areas will be developed by developing the Commercial Project in the above said land.
4) By the development of Commercial area, the Government will get the Taxes in various forms.

Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his/her objection to Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days from this notice. Any objections received after stipulated time will not be considered.

Sd/-
Member Secretary,
B.M.I.C.A.P.A., Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/6481/SSC/2025-26

BENGALURU-MYSURU INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDOR AREA PLANNING AUTHORITY
No.5, 2nd Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560009.
Phone: 080-22341230/35 E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No:BMICAPA/CLU-03/116/2025-26/2904 Date: 26.03.2026

PUBLIC NOTICE
(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Sri Shankara K S/o Karigowda has applied to this Authority seeking Change of land use from **"Agriculture"** Zone to **"Commercial"** purpose pertaining to Sy.No:120/3 extent of 00Acre-23Guntas and Sy.No:120/8 extent of 0Acre-29¾Guntas of B Gowdagere Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mandya Taluk, Mandya District under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961. The foresaid land is reserved for **Agriculture zone** in approved Master plan. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following:

1) By developing the Commercial Projects in the above said land, the general public will get jobs.
2) During the development works of the layout there will be opportunity of employment for labourers.
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Sd/- Member Secretary,
BMICAPA, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/JA/6472/2025-26

Media contribution key in building Viksit Bharat: PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Lauding its pivotal role, PM Narendra Modi on Thursday said that media helps in creating public awareness and nurtures active participation in issues of social and national importance. "As the nation marches towards building Viksit Bharat, the media's contribution will prove significant in strengthening our unity and sense of purpose," he said in a special written message at the Times Now Summit 2026.

While congratulating The Times Network on its new brand identity, the PM said: "In this journey, platforms like The Times Group play a vital role, informing citizens, shaping ideas, strengthening dialogues and amplifying India's voice on the global stage. A new identity for the Times Network is a forward-looking step that reflects progress."

Information and broadcasting minister Ashwini Vaishnaw unveiled the new brand identity along with Times Group MD Vineet Jain.

"This is far more than a visual transformation. It is a declaration of purpose. It reflects a network that is not bound by geography but energised by connection. This new identity embodies a larger vision of a network that serves as a bridge — between India and the world, and equally, between the world and India," Times Group MD said.

I&B minister Ashwini Vaishnaw (right) along with Times Group MD Vineet Jain unveiled the new brand identity of The Times Network

Yamunotri opens doors to devotees of all faiths

Dehradun: Yamunotri temple authorities have said all devotees are welcome at the shrine and that anyone with faith in Sanatan Dharma may seek the blessings of Mother Yamuna without hindrance, setting the dham apart from Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri, where authorities have supported restrictions on the entry of non-Hindus, **reports Kautilya Singh & Ashish Mishra.**

Sunil Uniyal, secretary of the Yamunotri Temple Committee, said all devotees visiting Yamunotri Dham were welcome.

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

March 27

Ram Charan
Actor, producer who primarily works in Telugu films
AlwaysRamCharan
alwaysramcharan

Akhil Kumar
Olympian boxer, 2006 Commonwealth Games gold medallist
Akhilkumarboxer
akhilkumarboxer

March 28

Swati Piramal
Scientist, business woman, philanthropist; vice chairperson of Piramal Group
swatipiramal
swatipiramal

Akshaye Khanna
Actor known for films like Dil Chahta Hai, Border, and most recently Dhurandhar
AkshayeKhanna
akshaye_khanna_

Cricket Season
IPL 2026 to begin with RCB-SRH faceoff

March 30

Rajiv Pratap Rudy | Former Union minister in NDA govt, four-time MP, and a licensed pilot
RajivPratapRudy rajivprataprudyofficial

Through sun, snow or rain, Ulfat keeps lifelines on track

▶ Continued from page 1

Ulfat Bano (right) says she has witnessed hundreds of families break into celebration whenever she has been the bearer of good news

Hirapora sits at an altitude where snow covers walking tracks for weeks. But the postal department can count on Ulfat to be out on her route, as usual, with an umbrella in one hand and a bundle of mail in the other. She refuses to take a break. Sun, rain or snow, the mail goes out.

In a profession dominated by men, Ulfat earns Rs 22,000 a month, working the same hours and covering equal ground as her male counterparts elsewhere in J&K. She doesn't seek a distinction. Nor does she seek any concession. With barely five years to go for retirement, the work takes a toll Ulfat didn't feel at 25. "It gets difficult at times," she tells TOI. "But my passion for this job does not allow me to quit."

What keeps her going are the intangible rewards of her profession. Over the past 30 years, Ulfat has witnessed hundreds of families break into celebration whenever she has been the bearer of good news – a long-awaited letter, a job offer or a parcel from someone far away.

"I see my work as a good deed," says Ulfat. "It connects people across geographies."

Outside the Hirapora post office, a small brick building with the familiar India Post sign above a green curtain, Ulfat sits on the wooden steps, hands folded on her lap. It's a typically bright spring morning, which should make the grind less taxing than it is when the weather isn't her ally.

Inside the building, the next batch of letters and parcels is getting packed.

Tribal couple rescued before jumbos flatten house in Ch'garh

Rashmi.Drolia@timesofindia.com

Raipur: An elderly tribal couple were rescued from their mud house minutes before a herd of 11 elephants flattened it in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district, forest officials said Wednesday. The operation unfolded in Bhadrapara hamlet of Tildega village in Pathalgaon forest range.

Around midnight on March 24, the forest department received an alert that an elderly couple — Bitan Nag (65) and Rajmati Nag (60) — were trapped inside the house that the herd had surrounded. Their son, Jai Kumar Nag, had somehow managed to escape.

Jashpur DFO Shashikumar said patrolling staff and a rapid response team were dispatched immediately. As villagers held their breath, the team first drove the elephants in a safe direction, secured the area, and then entered the house to evacuate the elderly couple. The duo was shifted to a safer location in a govt vehicle. Forest officials said they had tracked the herd for the past fortnight in Nandanjhariya forest and alerted nearby villages.

Row over Indore penthouse; owner's son ploughs car into residents, woman techie dies

Times News Network

Indore: An 18-year-old boy ploughed his car into a group of residents of a township in Indore, killing a woman software engineer and injuring several others on Wednesday night, after a violent clash between his family and other residents over the commercial use of his parents' penthouse, rented out through Airbnb.

The deceased, Shampa Pathak Pandey, had moved into Shiv Vatika Township with her husband, Saurabh, their sons, aged 7 and 10, and her parents-in-law on March 13. Saurabh said that the dispute was brewing among residents over the penthouse in Sagarshree Enclave building. Residents had objected to the frequent movement of outsiders, foreigners, couples, and youngsters on the residential premises, police said.

On Wednesday night, tensions flared after some residents allegedly switched off the electricity supply to the penthouse, prompting its owner Kuldeep Choudhary to come downstairs and retaliate by cutting power to other flats. This triggered an argument that soon turned violent.

Kuldeep called his wife and their 18-year-old son, Mohnish, to the spot. Meanwhile, Mohnish attacked one of the residents and ripped out a chunk of his hair. The residents restrained Mohnish, who was trying to flee. When they shut the gates of the building, he jumped into his car with his mother and slammed it into the residents twice. ACP Parag Saini said that a case of murder and attempted murder has been registered against Kuldeep and Mohnish. Police have taken CCTV cameras DVR into custody. Investigators are also examining details of visitors who were accessing the penthouse through Airbnb.

34001/242/2526

E-mail ID:cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
cebuildings@rediffmail.com , Tel. -(0674)- 2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No-B-I-Sports-06/2025 Lr. No.- 9303 Bhubaneswar, the 18th Mar., 2026

Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. CE-Bldg-II-57/2025-26

1.	The Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (I/c), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the works, **(1) "Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Kalimela Block under Malkangiri District", (2)"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Khairaput Block under Malkangiri District", (3)"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Kudumulgoma Block under Malkangiri District", (4)"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Podia Block under Malkangiri District", (5)"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Mathili Block under Malkangiri District" & (6)"Construction of Block Level Stadium (With Indoor Hall) in Baipariguda Block under Koraput District"** as detailed below.		
2.	**Nature of work**	:	**Building Works**
3.	**No. of work**	:	**06 Nos.**
4.	**Bid Cost.**	:	**₹ 10,000/-**
5.	**Class of Contractor**	:	**'A'/ Special**
6.	**Availability of Bid Documents in the website**	:	**From dt.30.03.2026 to 17.00 Hours of dt.20.04.2026.**
7.	**Date of Opening of Bid**	:	**Dt.21.04.2026 at 11:30 AM.**
8.	**The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.**		

OIPR-34001/34117/1/25-26/0042

Sd/-
Chief Engineer, Buildings-II (I/c), Odisha

LIC
भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders are invited from the reputed, bonafide and experienced tour operators for arranging Educational Seminar for Agents of LIC of India at Japan in the month of May 2026.

For details visit :
www.licindia.in/tenders and
http://www.tenderwizard.com/LIC

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(Marketing/PD)
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23, Park Road, Indore, Pin-452003 (M.P.)
Website : https://www.sgsits.ac.in
Phone No. : 0731-2434095, 2538760, 2541567, 2548334-38

No.Estt/Rect./2026/3064-1 to 12 Dated : 24.03.2026

RECRUITMENTS

Shri G.S. Institute of Technology & Science, Indore invites applications from eligible Indian Nationals for the posts of **Assistant Professors (Entry Level, Stage-I, Level-10)** in various departments of the Institute through a Rolling Advertisement. The appointment shall be offered on contract initially for 3 years (with applicable annual increments and benefits), thereafter, regular appointment may be offered after reviewing the performance. The Institute also invites applications for **Professor of Practice** in various disciplines as per AICTE and Institute norms.

For detailed information regarding qualifications, experience, pay scales and application format, please visit the Institute website : **www.sgsits.ac.in.** The last date of online applications in the prescribed format (in "Round 1) is 23.04.2026 (up to 6:00 PM).

M.P. Madhyam/125059/2026 **DIRECTOR**

VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY
General Administration Department
(An Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Govt. of India)

VACANCY NOTIFICATION NO. (1) C1/Rect./Dy. CE / (Dy. HoD)/2026, Dt. 03.03.2026
(2) C2/Rect./Sr. Dy. CAO/Finance Dept. /2026, Dt. 13.03.2026

1.	Name of the Posts	1. Deputy Chief Engineer (Civil) by Direct Recruitment (2 Posts - U.R) 2. Senior Deputy Chief Accounts Officer by Direct Recruitment (1 Post- U.R)
2.	Scale of Pay	Rs. 80000-220000 (For both Categories)
3.	Requisite Educational Qualifications & Experience	Please Visit VPA Website given below
4.	Upper Age Limit	42 Years (55 Years for existing Officers / Employees of Major Port Authorities) (for Both Categories)
5.	Crucial Date of Determining Eligibility	01.03.2026 (for Both Categories)

For detailed notification may visit careers section of VPA website: https://vpt.shipping.gov.in -Sd/-
SECRETARY

BEML LIMITED
बी ई एम एल BEML

(A Govt. of India Undertaking) (Schedule 'A' Company under Ministry of Defence)
Regd. Office: "BEML SOUDHA", 23/1, 4th Main Road, Sampangirama Nagar, Bengaluru-560 027 India

BEML Limited is a diversified Central Public Sector Company, known for its innovation, Inclusion and Integration across the various Business Verticals as a pathway of success. BEML has attained the requisite competitive edge by developing its in-house capabilities in Product-design, Manufacturing & servicing as a part of the Business Ecosystem & has become the Flag-bearer of India's Engineering Sector. It supplies global standard products to multi-Sectors such as Defence & Aerospace, Mining & Construction, Rail & Metro across India and overseas.

BEML is looking for energetic personnel for its Business Operations towards the following positions:

Sl	Position	Advt Ref
1.	ITI Trainees (Fitter, Turner, Machinist, Electrician, Welder)	KP/S/04/2026 DT:27.03.26
2.	Diploma Trainees (Mechanical , Electrical)	

Interested candidates may please visit the career page on BEML website **"www.bemlindia.in"** for detailed advertisement and application process, which will be hosted shortly.

Financial Services Institutions Bureau
An Autonomous Body of Government of India
invites applications for the position of

Chairman-cum-Managing Director
in
New India Assurance Company Limited

For details of Age, Educational Qualifications, Experience/ Service Requirements and other eligibility terms and conditions, please see the advertisement on https://fsib.org.in/ under the "Vacancies & Recommendations" tab.

How to apply: Interested candidates can apply **online** through the link available on https://fsib.org.in/ under the "Vacancies & Recommendations" tab or directly at https://www.research.net/r/cmdniacl26

Last date of receipt of application: 5:00 pm on 21-April-2026

Note: Further details including corrigendum, if any, shall be published only on the Bureau's website.

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3. **Consultant Radiation Oncologist :** MD(Radiotherapy)| Vac: 1 | Exp: 3-5 yrs.
4. **Medical Officer :** MBBS | Vac: 20 | Exp: 0-1 yrs.
5. **Radiotherapy Technologist :** Vac: 2 | Exp: 3-5 yrs. on TrueBeam Machine
6. **Physiotherapist :** BPT/MPT | Vac: 2 | Exp: 0-1 yrs.
7. **Dietician :** MSc/BSc in Food & Nutrition | Vac: 1 | Exp: Min. 2 yrs.
8. **HR Executive :** MBA(HR) | Vac: 1 | Exp: 0-1 yrs.
9. **Quality Control Executive :** MHA/MBA | Vac: 1 | Exp: 0-1 yrs.
10. **Jr. Biomedical Engineer :** BE in Biomedical/Electronics | Vac: 1 | Exp: 0-1 yrs.
11. **Civil Engineer :** BE(Civil) | Vac: 1 | Exp: 1-2 yrs.

- Please apply to **hr@jnchrc.com** or Contact at **(+91)9109124448** with name of post applied for in subject line with a copy of CV and highest certificate.
- Last date for Application is **10th April, 2026.**
- Salary is not a constraint for deserving candidates.

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISE
(Under the aegis of ICSSR, MoE, GoI)
Hyderabad

REQUIRES FACULTY

IPE is a nationally reputed B-School in Hyderabad and runs a range of AICTE approved Post Graduate Programmes in Management. IPE is consistently ranked among the leading B-Schools in India (1st Rank in Top Private B-Schools in Telangana, Outlook-ICARE Rankings 2026; 3rd Rank in Top B-Schools in Hyderabad, Business Today-B-Schools Survey 2025; and 1st Rank in Top Govt B-Schools in Telangana, GHRDC B-School Survey 2025, etc.).

IPE invites applications for Faculty positions and Professors of Practice (PoP) positions at all levels (Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor) in the following areas:

- HR / OB
- Corporate Strategy and Governance
- Operations / Supply Chain Management
- Business Communications
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- Banking & Fintech
- Marketing
- International Business

Candidates with Ph.D or Fellow from reputed Institutions with evidence of excellent teaching, research, publications in Scopus indexed journals, experience in training, consultancy and online education are welcome to apply. Fresh Ph.Ds from National Institutions like IIMs, IITs, etc., with good potential, are also welcome to apply. For further details, visit our website: www.ipeindia.org.

Last date for receiving Applications: 11.05.2026

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बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा Bank of Baroda
India's International Bank

Notice for Recruitment of Professionals in Bank of Baroda on Contractual Basis

Bank of Baroda, one of India's largest Banks is looking for Professionals on contractual basis for various positions in Wealth Management Services Department

S No	Postions	Vacancies
1	Assistant Vice President II - Group Head	4
2	Assistant Vice President II - Territory Head	17
3	Deputy Manager - Senior Relationship Manager	70
4	Deputy Manager - Wealth Strategist (Investment & Insurance)	13
	Total	**104**

Please note that the number of vacancies mentioned above are provisional and may vary according to the actual requirement of the Bank.

Eligibility criteria (age, qualification & experience), requisite fees and other details are available on Bank's website. Interested candidates are advised to visit the Bank's website https://bankofbaroda.bank.in ➡ Career Page ➡ Current Opportunities ➡ Recruitment of Professionals on Contractual Basis for Wealth Management Services Department Advt No. BOB/HRM/REC/ADVT/2026/08.

Candidates are advised to go through the detailed advertisement, ensuring their eligibility & other details before applying and remitting fees.

Any addendum/ corrigendum/ modification shall be notified only on the Bank's website.

Date for filling Online Application & Payment of Fee: 27.03.2026 to 16.04.2026 (23:59 hours).

Place: Mumbai
Date: 27.03.2026

Chief General Manager
(HRM & Marketing)
(180426-26)

PHOENIX ARC LIMITED

Reg Office : 3rd Floor, Wallace Towers, 139/140/B/1, Crossing of Sahar Road and Western Express Highway, Vile Parle East, Mumbai-400057, **Tel :** 022- 68492450, **Fax :** 022- 67412313, **CIN:** U67190MH2007PLC168303; **Email:** info@phoenixarc.co.in; **Website:** www.phoenixarc.co.in

ONLINE E-AUCTION SALE OF ASSETS

In exercise of the powers under the **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (in short referred to as SARFAESI Act) and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (in short referred to as RULES)** and pursuant to the possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder vested with the Authorised Officer under the said SARFAESI Act and RULES for recovery of the secured debts, the Authorised Officer has decided to sell the secured asset by way of e-auction sale.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and to the borrower, mortgagor and guarantor in particular, that the under mentioned property mortgaged to consortium of lenders being Phoenix ARC Limited (formerly knowns as Phoenix ARC Private Limited) acting in capacity as Trustee of Phoenix Trust FY16-23 (**Phoenix**) (pursuant to assignment of debt by State Bank of Hyderabad (**SBH**) in favour of Phoenix vide an Assignment Agreement dated 28-03-2016), State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, IDBI Bank Central Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Union Bank of India and Pegasus Assets Reconstruction Private Limited will be sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS AND WITHOUT RECOURSE"** condition, by way of an **"online e-auction"** for recovery of dues and further interest, charges and costs etc. as detailed below **in terms of the provisions of SARFAESI Act read with Rules 8 & 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)** through website **https://www.bankeauctions.com** as per the details given below:

Name of Borrower	**Base Corporation Limited (In Liquidation)**		
Name of the Guarantor	Mr. Girish Arora	Mr. Aditya Arora	Mrs. Radha Devi Arora
	Mr. Rakesh Sharma	Base Holding Limited	Pragati Goods Private Limited
	Girish Sons Investments Limited	Wofin Leasing and Finance Private Limited	Base Leisures Private Limited
	Statefield Distributors Private Limited	Popular Tie Up Private Limited	Maxim Tie Up Private Limited
	Doyen Vanijya Private Limited	Skylark Vanijya Private Limited	Manikaran Vyapaar Private Limited
	Real Tradecom Private Limited	Onkar Sales Private Limited	Pragati Goods Private Limited
	Paxin Vincom Private Limited		
Amount due as on the date of Section 13(2) Notice under SARFAESI Act dated 18-04-2017	**Rs.1565,41,44,209.31/-** (Rupees One Thousand Five Hundred and Sixty-Five Crores Forty-One Lakhs Forty-Four Thousand Two Hundred Nine and Paise Thirty-One Only) as on 31-03-2017 with further interest, charges, costs, etc.		
Possession Status	In Possession		
Inspection	On Request		
Reserve Price	Rs.16,61,00,000/- (Rupees Sixteen Crores Sixty-One Lakhs Only)		
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD Amount)	Rs.1,66,10,000/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty-Six Lakhs Ten Thousand Only)		
Bid Increment	Rs.5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Only) & in such multiples		
Bank Account Details	The Earnest Money must be deposited by way of RTGS/NEFT Favouring "PHOENIX TRUST FY16-23", Bank Name: Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, Current Account No: 0711733334, Branch : Kalina, IFSC Code: KKBK0000631		
Last Date of submission of Bid (E-Auction)	20th April, 2026 (Monday) on or before closure of banking hours		
Date of E-Auction	21st April, 2026 (Tuesday) between 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon		
Mode of E- Auction	Online – e auction		
Link for Sale Notice and Tender Documents	**https://phoenixarc.co.in?p=7002**		
Description of the Secured Asset being auctioned : All that piece and parcel of Converted (undeveloped) land property bearing Survey No. 229/9, admeasuring 1 Acre 10 guntas (total area 54450 sq. ft.) situated at Gunjur Village, Varthur Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk and **bounded as: East by:** Survey No. 229/9 and proposed peripheral ring road, **West by:** Survey No. 229/5, **North by:** Survey No. 229/12 belonging to Smt. Girija and Survey No. 228, **South by:** Survey No. 229/8 Together with all the buildings and structures thereon, fixtures and fittings both present and future			

Terms and Conditions of E- Auction

1. The Auction Sale is being conducted by the Authorised Officer under the provisions of SARFAESI Act with the aid and through e-auction. Auction/ Bidding shall be only through "Online Electronic Mode" through the website https://www.bankeauctions.com. M/s. C1 India Private Limited is the service provider to arrange platform for e-auction.
2. The Auction is conducted as per the Terms and Conditions of the Bid Document and as per the procedure set out therein. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale the bidders may go through the website of Phoenix, www.phoenixarc.co.in and the links mentioned herein above as well as the website of the service provider, www.bankeauctions.com for bid documents, the details of the secured assets put up for auction/ obtaining the bid form.
3. The bidders may participate in the e-auction quoting/ bidding from their own offices/ place of their choice. Internet connectivity shall have to be arranged by each bidder himself/itself. The Authorised Officer/ Phoenix/ service provider shall not be held responsible for the internet connectivity, network problems, system crash down, power failure etc.
4. For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may contact **Mr. Bhavik Pandya of M/s C 1 India Private Limited, Contact Number: +91-124-4302020/2021/2022/2023/2024, +91-8866682937 , Email ID: support@bankeauctions.com; maharashtra@c1india.com**
5. Bidders may also go through the website of Phoenix, www.phoenixarc.co.in for verifying the details of the secured asset put up for auction/ obtaining the bid form.
6. The e-auction will be conducted on the date and time mentioned herein above, when the secured asset mentioned above will be sold on **"AS IS WHERE IS" basis and "AS IS WHAT IT IS" & "WITHOUT RECOURSE" condition.**
7. All the intending purchasers/ bidders are required to register their name in the portal mentioned above as https://www.bankeauctions.com and get user ID and password free of cost to participate in the e-auction on the date and time as mentioned aforesaid.
8. For participating in the e-auction, intending purchasers/ bidders will have to submit the details of payment of refundable Earnest Money Deposit of 10% of the Reserve Price of the Secured asset along with copies of the PANCARD, Board Resolutions in case of Company and Address Proof as per terms detailed in Tender Documents, on or before the Last date for submission of EMD mentioned above.
9. The prospective/intending bidder shall furnish an undertaking that he/she is not dis-qualified as per provisions of Sec.29 (A) of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code,2016 and failure to furnish such undertaking along with the KYC documents, shall automatically disqualify and the bid submitted will be rejected.
10. The successful purchaser/ bidder shall deposit the 25% (inclusive of EMD) of his/ its offer for each of the Item by way of RTGS/NEFT to the account mentioned hereinabove on or before the close of banking hours on **the date of Auction mentioned above or not later than the next working day,** which deposit shall have to be confirmed by Phoenix, failing which the sale will be deemed to have been failed and the EMD of the said successful purchaser/ bidder shall be forfeited.
11. The EMD of all other bidders who did not succeed in the e-auction will be refunded by Phoenix within 5 working days of the closure e-auction. The EMD deposited by the unsuccessful bidder shall not carry any interest.
12. The balance amount of purchase consideration shall be payable by the successful purchaser/ bidder on or before the fifteenth (15) day of confirmation of sale of the said secured asset or such extended period as may be agreed upon in writing. In case of default, all amounts deposited till then shall be liable to be forfeited.
13. No additions / deletions / Amendment of names of the bidders shall be permitted after acceptance of the bid. The name of the Bidder(s) submitted at the time of registration shall only be considered for this purpose.
14. For inspection of the property/ies or more information, the prospective bidders may contact **Mr. Harsh Magia / Mr. Brij Kishore Bilochi at following email address harsh.magia@phoenixarc.co.in / brijkishore.bilochi@idbi.co.in (email) or on +91-7506107562 / +91-9828528909 (Mob).**
15. At any stage of the auction, the Authorized officer reserves his right to vary any of the terms and condition of this notice for sale, without prior notice, at his discretion and the Authorised Officer may accept/reject/modify/cancel the bid/offer or post-pone the auction without assigning any reason thereof and without any prior notice.
16. The successful purchaser/bidder shall bear any statutory dues, taxes, fees payable, stamp duty, registration fees, etc. that is required to be paid in order to get the property conveyed/delivered in his/her/its favour as per the applicable law.
17. The payment of all statutory/non statutory dues, taxes, rates, assessments, charges, society dues, fees etc. owing to the property during any time, shall be the sole responsibility of the successful bidder only.
18. It shall solely be the responsibility of the successful bidder to get the sale certificate registered. The successful purchaser/bidder shall be solely responsible for obtaining E-Khata, any cost / expenses / fees / charges etc. payable to the society/any other authority towards the transfer of the rights in its / his / her favour. The sale certificate must be registered at the earliest as per state Law/Rules regarding transfer else the purchaser has to give the request letter to the Authorised Officer of Phoenix mentioning the reason of delaying the registration.
19. It is the responsibility of the successful bidder to obtain the NOC from the relevant authorities concerned as required for Registry of the sale including the payment of fee, taxes as applicable. All charges on account of obtaining necessary clearances or approvals, charges (including but not limited to society charges, NOC Charges, electricity, water, society charges, maintenances charges and charges required for transfer of the said property in favor of the successful bidder) should be undertaken by the successful bidder at its own cost, effort and liabilities.
20. The Secured Asset under e-auction as mentioned in sale Notice shall remain and be at the sole risk of the successful purchaser in all respects including loss or damage by fire or theft or other accidents, and other risk from the date of the confirmation of the Sale by the Authorized Officer. The successful bidder shall not be entitled to annul the sale on any ground of whatsoever nature.
21. The Borrower/ Mortgagor, who are liable for the said outstanding dues, shall treat this Sale Notice as a notice under Rule 8 Clause (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, about the holding of the above-mentioned auction sale. The borrowers/mortgagor are also hereby informed that they must take delivery of their personal house-hold belongings/articles lying inside the said secured asset under the custody of Phoenix, if any within 7 days from the date of publication, with prior intimation to Phoenix failing which the Phoenix shall have no liability/responsibility to the same and will dispose of at the risk of borrowers/ mortgagor.
22. To the best of knowledge and information of the authorized officer, there are no encumbrances on the secured asset, except, if any, mentioned in table above. The intending bidders shall make their own independent enquiries regarding encumbrances, title of secured asset put on auction and claims/rights/dues affecting the secured assets, including statutory dues, etc prior to submitting their bid. The auction advertisement does not constitute and will not constitute any commitment or any representation of Phoenix. The authorized officer of Phoenix shall not be responsible in any way for any third-party claims/rights/due. No claim of whatsoever nature will be entertained after submission of the online bid regarding secured asset put for sale.
23. The particulars specified in the e-auction notice published in the newspaper have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer; however, the Authorised Officer shall not be responsible/liable for any error, misstatement or omission.
24. In the event, the e-auction scheduled hereinabove fails for any reason whatsoever, Phoenix has the right to sell the secured asset by any other methods under the provisions of Rule 8(5) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and SARFAESI Act, 2002.

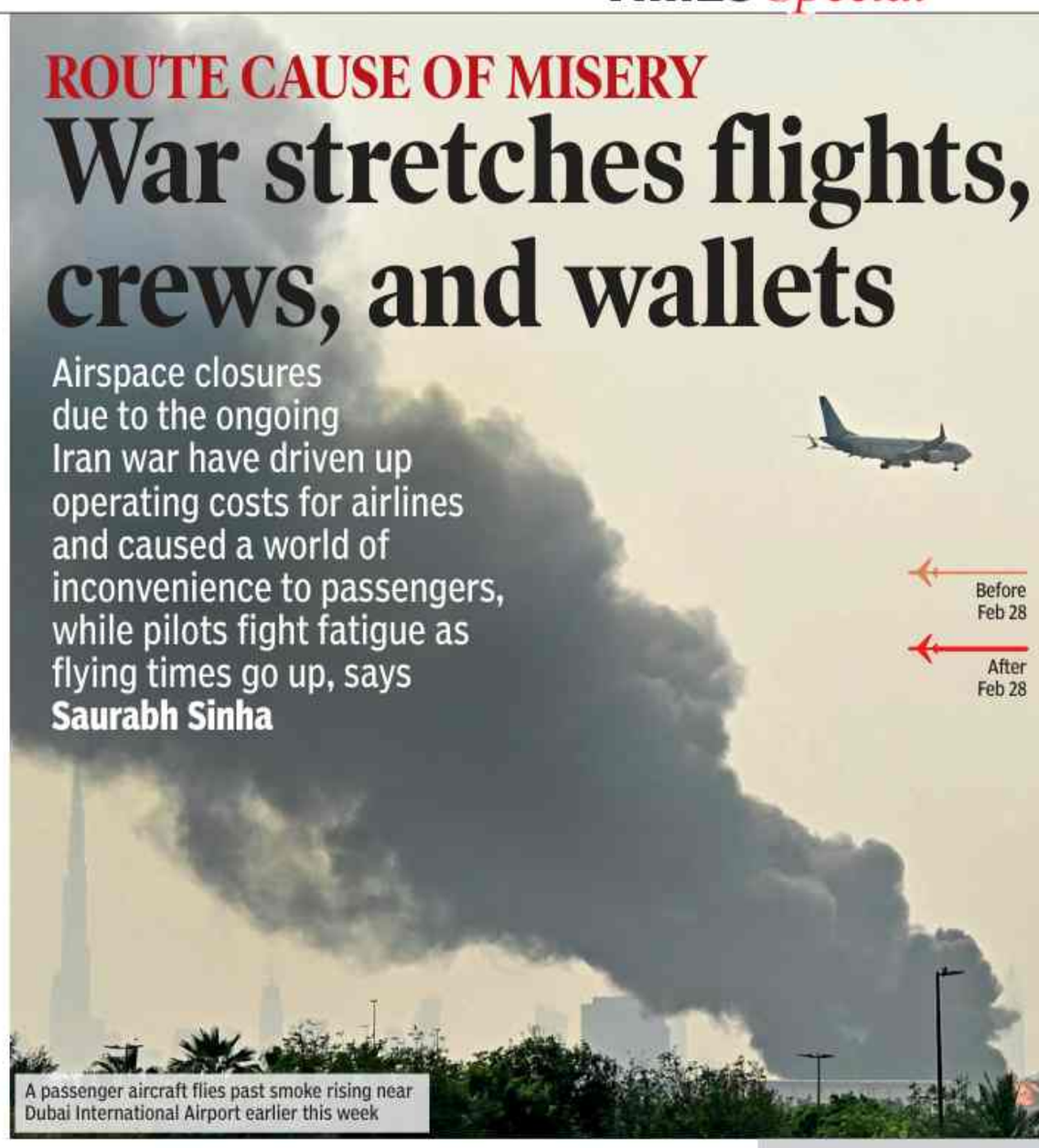
Place : Bengaluru
Date : 27-03-2026

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Phoenix ARC Limited, Phoenix Trust FY 16-23

ROUTE CAUSE OF MISERY

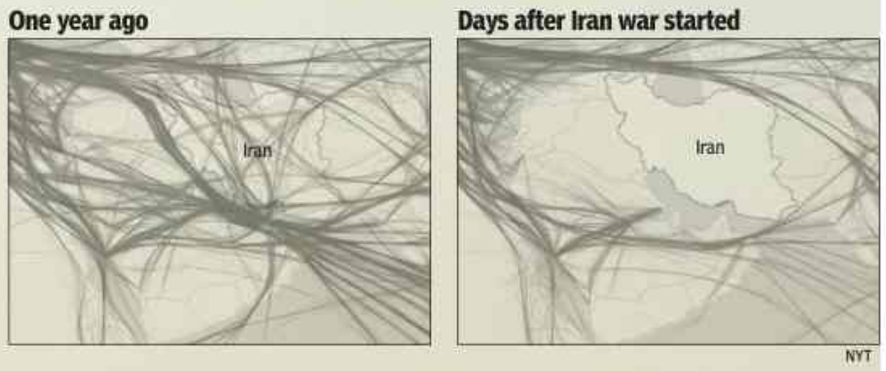
War stretches flights, crews, and wallets

Airspace closures due to the ongoing Iran war have driven up operating costs for airlines and caused a world of inconvenience to passengers, while pilots fight fatigue as flying times go up, says Saurabh Sinha



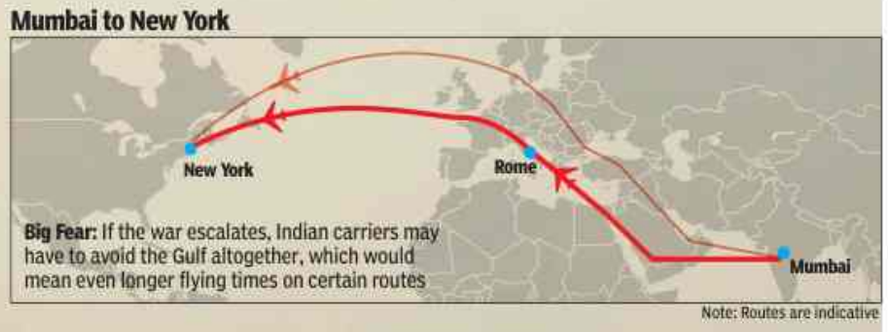
A passenger aircraft flies past smoke rising near Dubai International Airport earlier this week

HOW THE SKIES CHANGED



WHAT IT MEANS FOR FLIGHTS FROM INDIA

Take an AI Mumbai-New York flight. What was a non-stop service, lasting less than 17 hours before Feb 28, is now an over 20-hour flight, with a stop in Rome



Away from flights, some ways in which war's hurting India...

Medical devices: Rising medical-grade plastic, freight and gas costs are threatening medical supplies like syringes, hospital disposables. Prolonged disruption could trigger production cuts and price hikes

Pharma: Shortage of propane has led to shutdowns at drug plants across states. Output of some essential medicines hit

Fertilisers: LNG disruption is affecting ammonia and urea production ahead of kharif season

Restaurants/catering: Commercial LPG shortages are pushing up costs and disrupting operations

ACs: LPG and petrochemical shortages are hurting air-conditioner production just before the summer season

Automobiles: Costlier components, gas shortages are straining auto production

Indian Operators

Shrunk Network: They used to have between 400 and 500 daily flights between India and the West, a number that has sharply fallen since Feb 28 due to the closure of airports in Bahrain and Doha, even as those in UAE stay sporadically open and offer slots. Only a few places, like parts of Saudi, and Muscat, have regular flights and overflying these days in the region.

Half of IndiGo's 300 daily international flights were to the West and that has shrunk to a handful now. Air India Express had 110 daily West Asia connections, which is now down to 50 "ad hoc" connections. Air India had 254 scheduled weekly West Asia flights and that's dropped to 30-40. Akasa and SpiceJet have also seen a reduction in their Gulf flights.

Escalating Operating Costs: Since the Iran war began, aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices have effectively risen every time the rupee hits a new low, which is a daily feature now. It currently costs about $817 per kilo litre (kL) in both Delhi and Mumbai — up from about $779 last month. But the INR-to-USD exchange rate has gone from Rs 91 to Rs 93.30. So have all dollar-denominated costs — like lease rentals and maintenance — escalated.

To top it all, routes have got much longer, which means burning much more of that costly fuel. A Boeing 787 burns about five tonnes of fuel every hour and a B777 about 7.5 tonnes. If flying time goes up by two hours, there's an extra 10-15 tonnes burnt per flight. At $817 per tonne for international flights of domestic carriers, and the rupee at 93.30 to a dollar, the extra expense on fuel alone works out to Rs 80,000 per hour. Air India has 358 weekly flights to the West — covering Europe, UK and North America — which are still operating.

Indian operators upload much more fuel than usual from India these days so that aircraft can return home with passengers — instead of getting stuck — in case of escalated fighting in West Asia. More fuel means a heavier plane. And heavier the plane, more is the fuel burn.

> At current operating costs, it does not make sense to operate the West flights. We are doing so as a commitment to keep our flyers connected
> — SENIOR OFFICIAL AT AN AIRLINE

"At current operating costs, it does not make sense to operate the West flights. We are doing so as a commitment to keep our flyers connected. Flying aircraft has always meant defying nature, with heavy metal tubes kept airborne. Now, after the Iran war, they are defying economics, too," said a senior official. Airlines' pleas to govt for some relief on ATF excise or VAT have been futile so far.

The impact is staggering for all, more so the Maharaja. The AI Group, IndiGo and Akasa have imposed a fuel surcharge, ranging from Rs 199 to $200, on their flights. Insurance costs for flights to West Asia have soared by as much as Rs 30-40 lakh for a narrow-body return trip and Rs 90 lakh to Rs 1 crore for a wide-body round trip.

Fatigued Crew

With aircraft flying much longer routes to and from the West, Air India sought — and got — exemption from flight duty time limitation rules for its crew from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The regulator has now allowed its pilots to fly up to 11.5 hours, which means two pilots can operate longer flights without the need for a third one that would allow them to rest in turn en route. Pilots have been flying the longer routes from last April itself, when Pakistan airspace was closed during Operation Sindoor. The Iran war has further stretched the already long routes.

AI's Boeing 787 Dreamliner pilots are worst hit as that aircraft's cockpit seat allows limited recline due to a safety issue. "We are pushing our body to the limit of human endurance," is what a B787 pilot had to say, a sentiment echoed by others. "Imagine sitting in an uncomfortable office chair for 11.5 hours straight and being present 100% for the entire duration as we are flying close to a war zone with GPS jamming and spoofing all the way from the airspaces close to Pakistan to beyond Turkey. Airlines should be asked to increase pilot availability. God forbid, if something goes wrong, just blame the pilot. That's the usual script."

Both AI and DGCA are aware of the difficulties, which they blame on extraordinary circumstances. AI has converted 30 B777 pilots to the Dreamliner and they are expected to start flying in two months.

"We have formally sought coordinated flight time (FT) and flight duty period (FDP) exemptions from DGCA. These exemptions are intended to be used only till the current Middle East airspace restrictions are in effect and are critical for maintaining schedule integrity and minimise passenger inconvenience... All such exemptions are supported by safety risk assessments and will be applied strictly in accordance with approved conditions," AI senior VP (flight ops), Capt Manish Uppal, said in a mail recently to pilots.

Turbulence Hits Passengers

When the Iran war broke out, passengers were forced to shell out enormous amounts to fly to their destinations, and India was no exception. An Indian student, who had come to Delhi from Ireland in mid Feb for his grandfather's last rites, paid Rs 1.8 lakh for a one-way ticket to return to college.

Many people are holding on to their bookings on Emirates, Etihad, Qatar Airways for this summer. If the war does not end quickly and those airlines don't restore flights soon thereafter, airfares on other options will defy gravity in the approaching summer travel months that begin from early April in India.

Adding Capacity

Gulf carriers have historically carried a significant chunk of traffic between India and the rest of the world via their mega hubs like Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi. The sudden unavailability of the Big Three has created a vacuum, with passengers who'd already booked on them for travel post Feb 28 now looking for alternatives and, thus, chasing the same limited options as those making fresh bookings.

Air India is adding as many extra flights to the West as possible. Lufthansa deployed its 500-seater Airbus A380 instead of the 280-seater A350 on Munich-Delhi and Munich-Mumbai routes apart from increasing frequency between Chennai and Frankfurt. SWISS will operate a second daily service between Delhi and Zurich during March 19-24. Lufthansa is weighing the option of getting more group airlines to India. Only Lufthansa, SWISS and ITA now fly to India; there are other group carriers that do not as of now, including Austrian, Brussels Airlines, Discover, and Eurowings.

Home on wheels, freedom on call

Chittaranjan.Tembhekar@timesofindia.com

Caravan tourism is seeing a surge in popularity, driven by a growing tribe who skip hotels and over-curated experiences in favour of travel at their own pace, giving up room service for spontaneity

Just after sunrise, somewhere between the misty curves of Igatpuri and the Sahyadri ridges, Vaibhav Surve unlatches the door of his caravan and steps out, barefoot. There is no hotel corridor, no reception desk, no buffet timing to worry about, only the gently undulating hills stretching into the distance, birdsong breaking the silence and a kettle on the boil inside a compact kitchen on wheels.

"You wake up to nature in its raw, untouched form," Surve says of his Dec road trip with friends. "That's something a hotel room can never offer."

Across India, a small but growing number of travellers is discovering caravan tourism — specifically the joys of unhurried, immersive travel. This form of tourism, or unwinding, is not new around the world, but is finding fresh traction in India, led largely by urban explorers from Maharashtra who have forsaken crowded resorts, rigid itineraries and over-curated experiences.

From sunrise drives along the Konkan coast to offbeat halts in the jungles of Tadoba or the winding ghats of Goa, caravans are offering something rare in modern travel: control. You decide where to stop, how long to stay, and when to move on. Depending on place and proposed circuit, it takes between Rs 12,000 and Rs 15,000 per day to rent a caravan. It's not cheap, but that freedom is addictive, for those who can afford it.

Muted Promotion, Growing Market

This surge in interest is happening despite poor and patchy promotion by govts. Policies exist, incentive schemes are announced, but on the ground, awareness is still largely driven by word of mouth, social media and early adopters.

"Mumbai is emerging as a major market for caravans," says Prateek Athalye of The Vacay Vans, one of Maharashtra's better-known caravan providers. "Travellers are opting for everything — from raw camping to luxury city-to-city journeys. After six years of managing vans, I've seen how rising awareness alone is driving strong demand."

That demand cuts across age groups.

Young professionals want road trips without the hassle of hotel bookings. Families want safety, hygiene and flexibility. Elderly travellers appreciate having their bed, toilet and kitchen always close at hand. Women travellers and pet owners, often underserved by conventional travel options, find caravans liberating.

Akshay Mhadik, who recently travelled in a rented caravan, calls it "the perfect blend of adventure and home-like comfort." He recalls a spacious bed, a compact kitchen for quick meals and the luxury of choosing a destination on a whim. "If you've ever dreamed of picking a spot on the map and heading there without worrying about hotels or packing light, this is the way to go," he says.

HOME & AWAY: Caravan holidays offer a degree of control that hotels and fixed travel itineraries don't

Why Maha Fits The Caravan Dream

Maharashtra is well suited for caravan tourism because of its 720km coastline, dense forests, heritage towns, wine trails, highways and hill ranges.

Pre-pandemic, in 2018-19, the state recorded 12.4 crore visitors, translating into roughly 3.1 crore travelling groups annually. Industry estimates suggest that catering to even 1% of this market would require around 1,725 caravans — enough to generate nearly Rs 465 crore annually in rental revenues at current rates.

The state govt has rolled out a caravan tourism policy with incentives aimed at attracting private players and young entrepreneurs. But industry insiders say execution remains uneven, leaving much of the momentum to the private sector.

The private sector is brimming with ideas to ramp up caravan travel, but hamstrung by lack of finance options, says Rahul Soman, director, Wacation On Wheels (WOW), which started caravan rentals in Maharashtra in 2016, the first to do so. "Individual investors are now willing to invest in caravans, since the Mahindra Caravahn is being offered with a bank finance option. But the business as such still does not fit into any of the finance schemes of financial institutions."

The organic growth of the market is such that WOW Caravans is setting up a network of dedicated parking spots at tourist locations across the state. This will give all caravan operators access to amenities — such as hygienic sewage disposal facilities, and water and power supply — at scenic parking locations, near lakes, beaches, forests, forts, hillsides or riverbanks. "However, funding to set up this caravan eco-system is hard to come by without collateral," Soman says.

Another state that's seeing an interest in caravan holidays is Rajasthan, which, enthusiasts say, offers freedom, raw beauty, and cultural immersion. Aman Verma, who recently rented a caravan to travel the state, recalls evenings spent around campfires, listening to folk music and seeing Kalbeliya dances. Waking up to the golden hues of the Thar Desert near Jaisalmer, or spending nights under a star-studded sky felt truly magical, he adds.

"We savoured local sweets and explored havelis," Verma says. "Our caravan became a cosy home on wheels, letting us pause wherever the scenery called — whether it was wild camping in quiet desert spots, near ancient temples, or pulling over for spontaneous chai with hospitable locals, who shared stories. Rajasthan in a van or caravan isn't just travel — it's living the rhythm of India's royal, colourful heart, one open horizon at a time," says Verma, who has a YouTube travel channel.

Private Initiatives

One of the biggest initiatives in the caravan sector has come from private player Campervan Group, which has inked MoUs with the Tamil Nadu govt, committing Rs 185 crore over the next three to five years to develop caravan infrastructure and entrepreneurs. The project is also expected to create 300 direct entrepreneurs and nearly 3,000 indirect jobs.

Industry-watchers believe Maharashtra could be next. With Mumbai's large base of road-trip enthusiasts and the state's natural advantages, similar partnerships could unlock economic value, if policy intent translates into action.

Campervan also recently announced a nationwide CARS (Caravahn-As-Rental-Service) entrepreneurship programme, with a simple idea: to turn caravan tourism into a structured industry, not just a niche travel fad.

Founder and director K M Vandhan says the goal was to establish caravan tourism as a large-scale industry in India. The company has contributed to state tourism policies and to the drafting of the national AIS 207 Trailer Caravan Guidelines, now awaiting notification.

To support operators and travellers, Campervan has also built Travelkeet, a booking platform that connects caravan renters with operators and safe parking locations — from farmhouses and homestays to resorts and private land. Agri-tourism, in particular, is seen as a win-win, giving farmers an extra income stream.

'Not Just The Destination'

For travellers like Surve, however, the appeal of caravan tourism remains deeply personal. "It's not just about the destination," he says. "It's about waking up with the hills, sharing meals under open skies, and feeling like a part of the landscape."

In a country racing towards faster, flashier tourism, caravan travel is quietly arguing for something slower, softer — and perhaps more meaningful. And on India's long highways, that argument is finding more listeners by the day.

INSIDE CARAVANS

Sleeping facility for four: double bed on upper deck, sofa-cum-bed on lower deck | Built-in bathroom with bio-toilet, hand shower, wash basin | Independent rooftop AC (in addition to vehicle AC) | In-built kitchenette | Optional features include refrigerator, microwave, TV

Where To Park?
- Anywhere, keeping safety in mind
- States developing caravan parks at tourist sites

INQUIZITIVE

JOY BHATTACHARJYA

1. Which bird is the official state animal of Sarawak, the state bird of Kerala, and appears as the king's adviser Zazu in 'The Lion King' franchise?
2. During World War 2, the British popularised the myth that eating this vegetable had improved the night shooting of their fighter pilots, to hide from the Germans that they had actually invented radar. Name the vegetable.
3. Which popular OTT series created by Korean Hwang Dong-hyuk originated from 'ojingeo', a children's game?
4. Which tourist attraction in Paris has 10 bells — Emmanuel, Marie, Gabriel, Anne-Geneviève, Denis, Marcel, Étienne, Benoît-Joseph, Maurice, and Jean-Marie — which, apart from regular religious activities, were also rung to commemorate events of importance like the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the liberation of Paris in 1944?
5. What connects these two bodies of water — the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman?
6. Neverland Ranch was a property in Santa Barbara County, California, named after the fantasy island in 'Peter Pan'. Who was its most famous resident, living here on and off between 1988 and 2005?
7. Which two-word term was popularised by film writer Justin Zackham and was also the title of a 2007 film starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman as two terminally ill men on a road trip?
8. The shells of which specific plant are used to make a variety of Indian musical instruments, including the sarod, the dilruba, and the sitar?
9. After Hans Wilsdorf & Alfred Davis founded a firm to make timepieces in 1905, what five-letter name did they choose because it was short enough to fit on the product's face and was easy to pronounce?
10. Which 1978 Hindi film featuring Dharmendra, Zeenat Aman, Shammi Kapoor and Rex Harrison was released in English with the title 'Raiders of the Sacred Stone'?

ANSWERS

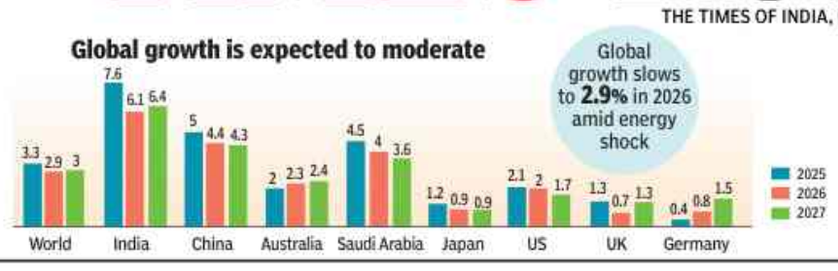
1 | The Hornbill
2 | Carrots. They actually do improve night vision
3 | Squid Game (ojingeo is Korean for squid)
4 | Notre-Dame
5 | Strait of Hormuz
6 | Michael Jackson
7 | Bucket List
8 | Bottle gourd
9 | Rolex
10 | Shaliimar
Cathedral

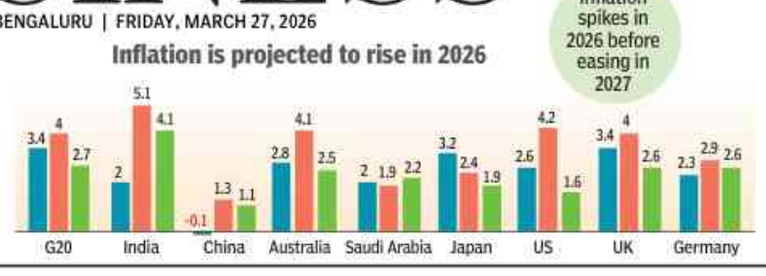
TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026

War ripples reshape inflation, India growth stands strong

Energy shock lifts inflation, keeps policy cautious globally. **India remains fastest major economy despite slowdown**, as tariffs ease partly but uncertainty persists, indicates OECD





- Central banks stay cautious as inflation risks persist
- Fertiliser costs rise with energy disruptions, supply risks

All figures in % Source: OECD

Industry knocks govt door with steps to address supply woes

Seeks Loan Relief, Access To Fuel, Help On Rising Freight

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Amid disruption in supply chains, including inputs for medicines to glass, sulphur, solvents and polymers, industry has approached govt with multiple suggestions, ranging from relief in loans for small businesses staring at turning to non-performing assets due to lack of gas availability to operationalising a "green corridor" for goods flow to ports such as Sohar, Jeddah and Khorfakkan.

It has also called for restricting the use of certain inputs, such as helium, and developing a domestic war risk insurance market. The lack of gas for industries has affected several sectors, be it ceramic or dyeing units, steel, aluminium or plastics.

While freight rates have gone up, reflecting in a 20% jump in Drewry World Container index between Feb 26 and Thursday ($2,279 for a 40-feet container), availability is becoming a challenge, which is hurting supply chains as ships take a longer route and go around the Cape of Good Hope to reach Europe or the US. Going forward, a container supply crunch is widely expected.

TOI spoke to industry representatives and one of the suggestions in their proposals to govt is a time-bound freight support mechanism to offset the impact, especially for smaller businesses.

The supply disruptions from West Asia are prompting Chinese companies to jack up active pharma ingredient rates, including for blood pressure and sugar medicines.

There are suggestions to tap alternate markets for fertilisers (Canada for potash, Russia and Egypt for urea). And, same for sulphur where export curbs have been proposed, apart from sourcing from Russia, the US and Kazakhstan. When it comes to helium used for MRI, industry has suggested restricting non-essential use, sourcing from Russia and also recovery from geothermal sources.

Some of the industrial clusters are also seeking access to alternate fuel, such as furnace oil, diesel and cooking to gas and permission for a quick switchover. In addition, like households, there is a suggestion to let industrial and commercial users, with dual fuel capability, prioritise piped gas over LPG.

"There is a need to establish a technical priority, with 80-90% continuity of LNG supply on an average for industries, such as glass, speciality chemicals and ceramics for next four-six weeks," said an industry executive. With furnaces shut due to unavailability of gas, food and pharma packaging as well as containers for vaccines may be hit.

There are demands from industries, such as chemicals and petrochem, to suspend or reduce tariffs for three-six months due to a surge in costs.

Besides, there are proposals for a Covid-like loan relief for sectors hit by gas supply woes. One of the suggestions is a sector-specific advisory by RBI, allowing banks to treat gas-dependent manufacturing clusters as a temporary event and allowing asset classification standstill for 90 days. There are also some medium- to long-term solutions with developing a permanent domestic war-risk insurance framework on conflict-related maritime disruption being flagged.

INDUSTRY'S TOP CONCERNS

- Gas supply disruption putting pressure on several industries, including critical inputs for pharma and other sectors
- Can turn small industrial units with bank loans into non-performing assets for lenders
- Increase in freight rates by over 20% on key routes, longer sail time and adverse impact on availability of ships
- Weaker rupee is adding to cost pressure

West Asia war to strain India's FY27 fiscal math: ICRA

New Delhi: A surge in global crude oil and natural gas prices amid the West Asia conflict is likely to complicate India's fiscal position in FY27, potentially increasing subsidy burdens and pressuring revenues, ratings agency ICRA said.

Input and logistics costs have gone up, disrupting supplies, including key fertiliser inputs, the agency said. This could lift the govt's fertiliser and LPG subsidy outgo while weighing on corporate tax collections, refining margins and dividend receipts.

ICRA said the government may use the Economic Stabilisation Fund to absorb part of the fiscal shock, along with measures such as front-loading subsidy payments and seeking supplementary grants later in the year.

While these buffers could help limit any major slippage from the fiscal deficit target of 4.5 per cent of GDP, risks remain skewed to the upside if elevated energy prices persist due to a prolonged conflict, it added. AGENCIES

Gold slips as markets weigh likely ceasefire

Gold prices retreated on Thursday, hurt by a firmer dollar and higher oil prices that kept inflation fears intact and sustained expectations of elevated interest rates, while market participants reconsidered the chances of a West Asia ceasefire.

Spot gold was down 1.1% at $4,455.51 per ounce. US gold futures for April delivery lost 2.2% to $4,452.20. Among other metals, spot silver fell 3.2% to $68.97, platinum was down 3.2% at $1,858.46, and palladium shed 4.5% to $1,359.62. In New Delhi on Wednesday, gold of 99.9% purity increased by Rs 4,900, or 3.4%, to Rs 1,49,700 per 10gm, while silver surged by Rs 11,250, or 4.9%, to Rs 2,41,250 per kg. US dollar nudged higher, making bullion more expensive for other currency holders. REUTERS

E-2-wheelers may get subsidy for 3 more mths

Saksham Mehta & Dipak Dash | TNN

New Delhi: Govt is likely to extend subsidies for electric two-wheelers under the PM e-Drive scheme until June, while subsidies for e-rickshaws may continue for two years or so. The scheme, initially notified in Sept 2024, is valid till March 31.

"We are looking at extending the incentive for these two categories of electric vehicles. Since we have budget under this head, we want that more people get the benefit of the scheme," a person aware of the development said. Under the scheme, e-two-wheeler and e-rickshaw buyers get subsidy of Rs 2,500 per kWh.

Official data shows that out of Rs 1,772 crore subsidy earmarked for electric two-wheelers, about Rs 1,260 crore has been utilised. For electric three-wheelers, Rs 737 crore has been spent out of the Rs 907 crore allocation.

Industry sources said e-rickshaw manufacturers have struggled to meet localisation norms under the Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP), making it difficult for many players to qualify for subsidies.

"In the e-rickshaw segment, localisation remains a challenge as several key components such as traction battery packs, motors and instrument clusters are still largely imported. This has limited eligibility for incentives and slowed fund utilisation," an industry executive said. The Rs 10,900-crore PM E-Drive scheme aims to accelerate EV adoption and build charging infrastructure across the country. Incentives are offered as upfront price reductions for buyers, which are later reimbursed to manufacturers, while localisation norms are aimed at strengthening domestic EV manufacturing.

The scheme has been extended by two years, from March 2026, to March 2028, to support the adoption of electric buses, trucks, and ambulances. The scheme aims to boost local manufacturing, requiring e-bus makers to localise traction motors, but so far, no electric buses or trucks have hit the road, according to department of heavy industry data.

India backs WTO reset with core focus intact

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India on Thursday backed reforming the World Trade Organisation but underlined the need to retain the core focus on poor and developing countries and a consensus-driven decision-making process.

"The necessary reform of WTO should be carried out through a transparent, inclusive and member-driven process, keeping development at its core, upholding the foundational principles and objectives of the organisation, mainly non-discrimination, consensus-based decision making and equity. Special and differential treatment (S&DT) should be precise, effective and operational," commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal said in his intervention at the ministerial meeting that kicked off on Thursday.

While calling for past mandates given by members to be delivered, the minister highlighted the need to get the dispute settlement mechanism going again. The US has blocked appointments to the appellate body, holding up the entire dispute resolution process. He also flagged his concern over the failure of the WTO membership to address concerns of poor countries that grow and export cotton, or India's concerns over public stockholding, an issue that has been pending for 12 years now with ministers kicking the can down the road every time they meet.

India also thumbed down China's push for an investment facilitation framework but did not make an explicit mention. Instead, Goyal said the incorporation of plurilateral outcomes into the WTO framework should be based on consensus and not impair existing rights of non-parties or cast additional obligations on them.

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Ramu Manjunath

Head of Core Infrastructure,
Narayana Health

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West Asia conflict may hurt growth, spur inflation: ADB

'Higher Energy Prices, Supply Disruptions To Hit Apac Region'

ADB flags policy dilemma as energy shocks strain finances, disrupt trade and tighten liquidity, urging targeted support for vulnerable sectors

New Delhi: The West Asia conflict could lower economic growth in Asia Pacific region by up to 1.3 percentage points over 2026-2027 and raise inflation by 3.2 percentage points if energy market disruptions last more than a year, according to a research by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"The conflict affects economies in Asia and the Pacific through higher energy prices, supply chain and trade disruptions, and tighter financial conditions. Tourism and remittances could also be impacted," ADB said in the report. The report outlines three risk scenarios indicating that effects on the region's developing economies will depend largely on the duration of disruptions, it said.

Under a short-lived conflict, energy price pressures would ease relatively quickly. More prolonged disruptions would lead to larger and more persistent impacts on growth and inflation, it said. Adverse effects on growth will be most severe for economies in developing Southeast Asia and the Pacific, with inflation rising highest in South Asian economies, it said, adding, the scenarios reflect the high degree of uncertainty around how the conflict and the associated disruptions will evolve, and should be treated with caution.

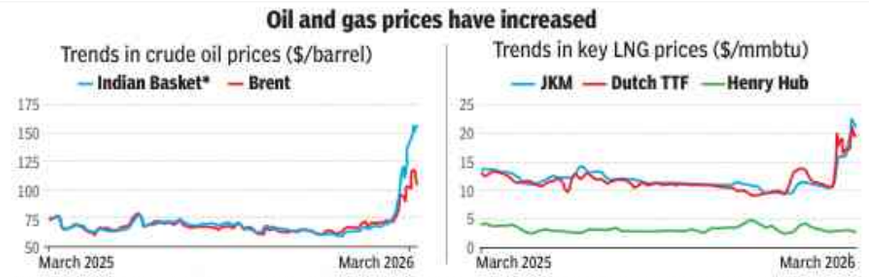
In addition to higher energy prices, they account for broader supply chain disruptions and global tightening of financial conditions, it said.

"Prolonged energy disruptions could force economies in developing Asia and the Pacific to navigate a difficult trade-off between weaker growth and higher inflation. Govts should focus on containing market stress and protecting the most vulnerable, while adopting policies to improve longer-term resilience," ADB chief economist Albert Park said.

The report suggested policies should focus on stabilisation rather than suppression of price signals. Allowing higher energy prices to pass through, at least in part, can encourage energy conservation, fuel switching, and investment in alternative energy sources. Broad price controls or generalised subsidies risk distorting incentives, delaying adjustment, and misallocating resources, it said. AGENCIES

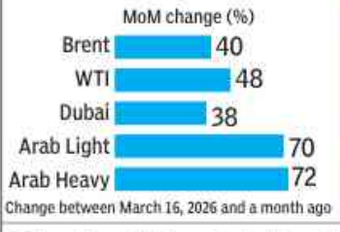
BARREL OF WOES: CRUDE TEST FOR POLICYMAKERS

Oil and gas prices have increased



*The Indian basket of crude oil represents a derived basket comprising of Sour grade (Oman & Dubai average) and Sweet grade (Brent Dated) of crude oil processed in Indian refineries, in the ratio of 78.71:21.29. This does not reflect the average price of India's crude oil imports; JKM: Japan Korea Marker; Source: CMIE, ICRA Research

Price increase is higher for oil coming from Gulf

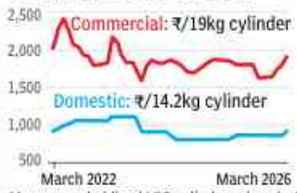


Change between March 16, 2026 and a month ago

Refining margins are rising, while fuel margins are falling

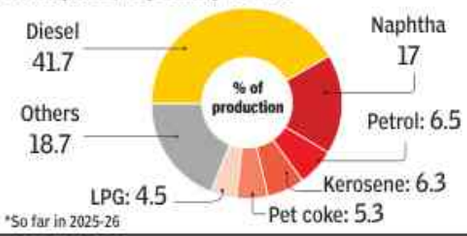
Diesel and ATF crack spread – refining margin between crude and the derivatives – has widened since the war started, but only RIL seen as sole gainer in India, while PSU refiners stand to lose

Cooking gas prices* have risen, but so have losses



*Avg non-subsidised LPG cylinder prices in 4 metros (Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai & Kolkata)

Given the refining mix, India will have to depend on imports, especially of LPG



*So far in 2025-26

Policy options

- At some point, oil companies will seek a price increase for pump prices
- Govt will have to increase subsidy payment for cooking gas
- Nomura has suggested levying windfall tax on ONGC & OIL, which can be used to compensate oil marketing companies

Source: ICRA, Nomura, NITI Aayog

Jindal Steel's deal with Thyssenkrupp faces delay

New Delhi: Jindal Steel International is seeking clarity from German authorities, with the proposed deal to acquire Thyssenkrupp Steel facing delays over pension-related issues, persons aware of the matter said. The talks remain active and the deal has not been abandoned, though certain legal and operational matters are yet to be resolved. Pension liabilities remain key issues under discussion and further assurances from German stakeholders may be required before the transaction can move forward.

"The deal is stuck, but it still has life...assurance is needed from the German establishment. They have to take a shot, may be it will take some more time to conclude, as the pension issue is stuck," a person familiar with the matter said. Thyssenkrupp confirmed that negotiations with Jindal Steel International and employee representatives are continuing as part of the due diligence process. TNN

Namma Yatri parent enters Europe with Dutch co buy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bengaluru-based Moving Tech Innovations, the company behind Namma Yatri, Bharat Taxi and Chennai One, has acquired Netherlands-based Automicle Holding , marking its entry into Europe. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. This marks Moving Tech's first international acquisition.

The company said the acquisition will help take its zero-commission mobility model to European cities. It operates on an open, interoperable framework.

Automicle, founded in 2022, builds digital mobility solutions such as smart parking systems and integrated public transport platforms, and works with city authorities across Europe.

Moving Tech said its platforms have facilitated more than 150 million trips so far, with drivers earning over €250 million (about Rs 2,713 crore) without commissions.

The company added that its technology stack can be deployed across ride-hailing, micro-mobility, parking and public transport systems.

In a statement, Automicle co-founders Jef Heyse and Mohit Mishra said the partnership will combine European market experience with Moving Tech's infrastructure to build locally governed mobility systems at scale.

Moving Tech co-founders Magizhan and Shan MS said cities are increasingly looking for open and accountable digital infrastructure, adding that both companies are aligned on building community-led mobility systems.

ArcelorMittal Nippon names Harlalka as CEO

Mumbai: ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS) will appoint its current CFO Amit Harlalka as CEO effective July 1. Incumbent CEO and director Dilip Oommen, 68, will step down from his role on June 30 and continue as a board member, AM/NS said. Oommen, the first CEO of the joint venture formed by ArcelorMittal chairman Lakshmi Mittal and Japan's Nippon Steel, has led the company since it acquired Essar Steel through bankruptcy proceedings in Dec 2019. TNN

Bharat PET files draft papers for ₹760cr IPO

New Delhi: Integrated packaging solutions provider Bharat PET has filed draft papers with Sebi to raise Rs 760 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). It comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 120 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of shares worth up to Rs 640 crore by promoters, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on Wednesday. The company may also consider a pre-IPO placement of securities aggregating up to Rs 24 crore. If undertaken, the size of the fresh issue will be reduced accordingly. TNN

'E-comm hiring up 35% in 2 years; AI, ops lead'

Engg Depth, Operational Agility Shape Workforce Strategy For Digital Commerce

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

FOCUS SHIFTS TO TECH & EXECUTION

- 3x surge in engineering roles as cos invest more in automation & platform stability
- Ops, gig workers remain crucial as q-comm pushes deeper into smaller cities
- Nearly 50% of new hires now in tech, product & ops as platform capability takes precedence
- AI specialists earn 30–40% more pay over conventional tech roles, senior talent earns up to ₹50 LPA

Bengaluru: India's e-commerce and quick commerce sector is hiring again, but the playbook has changed. Talent demand rose 35% between 2023 and 2025 to nearly 98,750 roles, even as companies shifted from expansion-led hiring to building technology capability and execution strength, according to a CIEL HR report.

The sharpest shift is in technology hiring. Demand for engineering roles has expanded more than threefold over the past two years, with companies prioritising software development engineers, DevOps engineers, solution architects, and AI and machine learning specialists. These roles are linked to investments in recommendation engines, chatbots, warehouse automation, payments systems and platform stability, the report said.

Nearly half of incremental hiring is now concentrated in technology, product and operations, signalling a structural move away from customer acquisition-led hiring towards platform capability and fulfilment-led workforce design. At the same time, traditional growth roles such as sales and marketing have declined in relative share.

Operational hiring remains critical as quick commerce expands into smaller cities. Demand in supply chain and fulfilment roles has risen 25%, with warehouse managers, fulfilment planners, city operations leads and inventory controllers forming the backbone of expansion. These roles are especially concentrated in tier-2 and tier-3 markets, where execution reliability is key to customer retention.

"India's digital commerce sector is entering a new workforce phase where engineering depth, operational agility and execution precision are becoming the strongest indicators of business competitiveness," said Aditya Narayan Mishra, managing director and CEO, CIEL HR. "Organisations are designing talent models that combine specialised technology capability with highly responsive frontline execution."

At the frontline, gig work continues to anchor the sector. India's gig workforce has crossed 12 million, with more than half engaged in delivery, dark-store fulfilment and hyperlocal logistics. Faster onboarding, enabled by app-based hiring and digital verification, is reducing activation timelines to as little as 24 to 48 hours, the report noted.

The shift is also reflected in pay. AI and machine learning specialists are earning 30–40% more than conventional tech roles, with senior talent in areas such as NLP and computer vision earning up to Rs 50 lakh annually.

Apple adds Bosch, Cirrus Logic, others to US manufacturing program

Apple said it was adding Bosch, Cirrus Logic, TDK and Qnity Electronics to its American Manufacturing Program, with plans to invest $400 million through 2030 to expand US-based production of key components. The move comes as companies increasingly shift manufacturing and critical supply chains to the United States to reduce geopolitical risks and strengthen domestic production. The expansion builds on Apple's $600 billion, four-year commitment to invest in US manufacturing announced last year. The new partnerships will focus on producing sensors, integrated circuits and advanced materials used in Apple devices. REUTERS

Deutsche Bk GCC fuels AI push with incubator

Mayur.Shetty @timesofindia.com

'AI Forward' Initiative

- DIPL's startup-style incubator lets employees across pitch ideas directly to leadership
- Ideas are refined with expert mentoring
- AI training for 20,000 staff on large language models and ethical use of AI
- 'Catalyst' teams embed AI specialists to prototype solutions in live environments

Mumbai: The Indian Global Capability Center (GCC) of Deutsche Bank is betting on a startup-style approach to accelerate artificial intelligence adoption, with its in-house incubator at Deutsche India Pvt Ltd (DIPL) drawing 100 ideas within its first 100 days, reflecting what its leadership describes as an unusually high openness to technological change among the local workforce.

Stefan Schaffer, MD & CEO of DIPL, said the India-based GCC has seen employees embrace AI-led transformation with far less resistance than in many mature markets. He attributed this to a broader cultural association of change with progress, shaped by rapid digital adoption in India, including platforms such UPI. "For many in their 30s and 40s, change has historically led to positive developments," he said, adding that this adaptability is proving valuable for a 150-year-old institution navigating structural shifts.

DIPL, which employs over 20,000 people across Pune, Bengaluru, Jaipur and Mumbai, is driving its AI push through a programme called "AI Forward", which combines top-down investment with bottom-up participation. A key pillar is the incubator, modelled on startup ecosystems, where employees can pitch ideas directly to leadership and refine them with expert input. Complementing this is a large-scale training effort that has already covered 20,000 employees on large language models and responsible AI usage, alongside a "Catalyst" initiative that embeds specialists within teams to prototype solutions in live environments.

The shift towards AI is part of a broader strategic reset at Deutsche Bank's technology operations. Having already rebalanced its workforce mix from 30% internal staff to 70%, and increased the share of engineers to 70%, the bank is now targeting deeper ownership from its GCCs. Under a new "70-50-30" framework, it aims to locate 50% of portfolio owners and 30% of senior leadership roles within its technology centres, including India, to ensure end-to-end accountability.

Schaffer said that while AI is becoming embedded in mainstream operations, core enterprise platforms will remain critical.

From beer to cosmetics, Asia feels full force of war-fuelled energy crisis

Asia Most Vulnerable To Middle East Supply Disruptions

In India, higher plastic costs have already pushed up bottled water prices, while brewers have warned of price increases due to higher gas costs

Seoul/Beijing: From beer and crisps to noodles, toys and cosmetics, companies and consumers across Asia are bracing for disruption as the Iran war strains supply chains, plastics and oil supplies, pushing up prices of everyday goods.

For many businesses, the crunch has already begun. Choi Gun-soo, manager of a 57-year-old South Korean factory that makes plastic films used in agriculture and electronics, said suppliers had raised prices of some raw materials by as much as 50%, while others had run out of stock. "Since we are out of raw materials for some products, we will have to gradually shut down machines, and the next one to two weeks are likely to be critical," he said. The company has cut production to 20-30% of usual output despite having weathered past oil shocks and the Covid-19 pandemic. "This is the first time we have been hit this hard. We are really shaken," he added.

At the centre of the disruption is the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway off Iran's southern coast through which about one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas normally passes. Asia, which depends heavily on crude oil, gas, fuel and fertiliser imports from the Middle East, is particularly vulnerable to supply disruptions.

The most acute shortages are in oil derivatives such as naphtha, largely sourced from the Gulf and used to manufacture plastics and petrochemicals that go into a wide range of consumer and industrial goods. Prices of key materials such as plastic and rubber have already surged to record levels. South Korea's Samyang Foods, maker of the popular Buldak instant noodles, said a prolonged conflict could lead to shortages of packaging materials and higher costs. Instant noodles rely heavily on polyethylene terephthalate (PET), one of the world's most widely used plastics, which is also used in packaging for food and personal care products.

Yonwoo, a packaging supplier to L'Oreal and K-beauty firms including Amorepacific, said it was scrambling to secure plastic resin needed for cosmetic containers, with limited visibility on supplies beyond June. "The issue is not just price — if supply is unavailable, products cannot be sold," a company official told Reuters, declining to be named. "We are stockpiling supplies, but beyond that we do not have substantial measures in place and are hoping the situation improves by May," the official said.

Rising raw material costs hit industry

China produces nearly half of the world's synthetic rubber, and shortages of naphtha used in its production are forcing manufacturers of tyres and gloves to consider price increases or a shift to natural rubber. China's output is expected to fall by about one-third in April due to the conflict, according to analyst Xinhua Jing at SCI. Tyremaker Michelin said its supply chain teams were "fully mobilised" to manage deliveries and honour contracts as far as possible.

In India, higher plastic costs have already pushed up bottled water prices, while brewers have warned of price increases due to higher gas costs. China's southern manufacturing hub of Dongguan is also feeling the pressure. Liu Chaonan, whose toy company supplies US retailer Walmart, said rising raw material costs were affecting the industry. "The situation in Iran is having a significant impact on our toy business," said Liu, who employs more than 150 people. "We may have to revise prices for new orders."

Higher crude prices directly feed into fuel costs, raising expenses for petrol, diesel, aviation fuel and cooking gas, and increasing operating costs for businesses worldwide. REUTERS

Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Area Planning Authority
No. 5, Second Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560009. Tel: 080-22341230/35, E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No:BMICAPA/CLU-01/26/2025-26/2906 Date: 26-03-2026

PUBLICATION

(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Smt. Kalpana Dayanand has applied to this Authority seeking Change of land use from **"Agriculture"** Zone to **"Residential"** purpose pertaining to Sy.No: 95/2 extent of 01 Acre-18 Guntas, Sy.No: 95/3 extent of 01 Acre, Sy. No: 95/4 extent of 02 Acre-11 Guntas total extent 04 Acre-29 Guntas of **Kodigehalli Village, Yeshwanthpura Hobli, Bengaluru North Taluk** under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961. The foresaid lands are reserved for Agriculture zone in approved Master plan. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following;

1. By developing the layout in the said land, sites will be available at reasonable rates to General Public.
2. During the development works of the layout, there will be opportunity of employment to labourers.
3. Surrounding areas will be developed by developing the layout in the above said land.
4. By planned layout the public are benefited with the civic amenities such as good roads, parks, etc.

Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his/her objection to Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days from this notice. Any objections received after stipulated time will not be considered.

Sd/- Member Secretary, B.M.I.C.A.P.A., Bangalore

DIPR/CP/RO6477/AAPL/2025-26

KARNATAKA NEERAVARI NIGAMA LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)
Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS, Division No-2, Huvinahadagali, Vijayanagara(Dist)
Ph.No.08399-200001 e-mail: eesld2hdl@gmail.com

TENDER NOTIFICATION(call-3)
(ONLY THROUGH "e-Procurement" SYSTEM)

Reference: 1.This office Tender Notification No: 1949/2025-26 Dated: 24.03.2026

Tenders in Electronic mode are invited on behalf of the Managing Director, KNNL, Bengaluru, by the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No.2, Huvinahadagali for the work of "Repairs to Canals of Right Side of Singatalur Lift Irrigation Scheme for the Year 2025-26" coming under SLIS Project from the eligible Tenderers who are fulfilling the terms and conditions mentioned as in Tender Notification cited at reference (1) above. The tenders having Work Indent No.KNNL/3025-26/OW/WORK INDENT4062/Call-3 in KPP-Portal and The amount put to tender this work is Rs.423.46 Lakh(Excluding GST) and EMD amount is Rs.8.35 Lakh.

Therefore, The bidders can access the tender in https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in website from 26.03.2026 and the last date of submission for the tender is 10.04.2026 and date of opening of Technical Bid 13.04.2026. A Pre-bid meeting held on 02.04.2026 at 11.00 AM in office of the Office of the Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No.2, Huvinahadagali.

Further bidders are hereby by instructed to contact or visit the below mentioned office in working hours regarding Terms and Conditions of the tender and for furthermore information please contact e-procurement Helpdesk Phone Numbers:-91-80-46010060, +91-80-68948777.Conditional tenders are liable to be rejected. The officer competent to accept the tender shall have the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, KNNL, SLIS Division No-2, Huvinahadagali, Vijayanagara(Dist)

DIPR/Vijayanagar/2025-26/KSMCA/RO No/820

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
DEPARTMENT FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED AND SENIOR CITIZENS
Podium Block, V.V.Tower, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bengaluru-560 001. Phone No.: 22860907. Fax: 080-22868347
E-mail: dirdwdscka@gmail.com

No.: DEDASC/STAFF/C1/02/2022-23 Date: 23.03.2026

NOTIFICATION

A notification is hereby issued to invite applications from interested candidates for the services of an IT expert/consultant for the period of 1 year at a monthly rate of ₹60,000/- to effectively implement the department's online schemes and the e-office software in the Directorate for the Empowerment of Differently abled and Senior Citizens, V. V. Tower, 6th Floor, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore-01 office by 16.04.2026 and the candidates will be appointed through an interview.

Candidates with the following educational qualifications/ experience may apply:

1. B.E in Computer Science / IT / Information Science.
2. Master of Computer Application.
3. Bachelor in engineering or B,tech in Electronic Telecommunication.

Weightage shall be given to the candidates having experience of working in government sector as a Technical consultant.

Age Limit:

Upper age limit 35 years on the last date of submission of application by state.

Sd/-
Director
Dept. for the Empowerment of Differently abled and Senior Citizens, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/6468/AKAR/2025-26

Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited
(Wholly owned by Govt. of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION - Call-2 (Through KPP Portal)

BESCOM invites tenders in **Two Cover System** for the following works.

Sl. No.	Enquiry No.	Name of the Work	Amount put to tender	EMD Amount in Rs.
1	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0449	Providing **Architectural Consultancy Services** for Preparation of Structural designs including structural drawings all Services for BESCOM Building for the work "Construction of building for S-7 Sub Division office, S-17 Sub Division office and Murgeshpalya O&M unit office of S-3 Sub Division at HAL 2nd stage, old Airport Road, Bangalore duly dismantling of S-17 Sub division and Murgeshpalya O&M unit office".	Rs. 11.05 Lakhs	28,000/- (Rupees Twenty eight thousand only)
2	BESCOM/2025-26/SE0450	Appointment of **PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY** Services for BESCOM Building for the work "Construction of building for S-7 Sub Division office, S-17 Sub Division office and Murgeshpalya O&M unit office of S-3 Sub Division at HAL 2nd stage, old Airport Road, Bangalore duly dismantling of S-17 Sub division and Murgeshpalya O&M unit office".	Rs. 14.73 Lakhs	37,000/- (Rupees Thirty Seven Thousand only)

Last Date & Time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications: **04.04.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs.** Last Date & Time for Receipts of Tenders: **08.04.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs.** Date & Time of Opening Technical Bid: **09.04.2026 at 16.30 Hrs.** Date & time of Opening Price bid. Will be intimated after technical evaluation to the responsive bidder.

The Details regarding participation in the tender can be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal by visiting website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in /** on or after Dated: **27.03.2026.**

For any Clarification contact KPP portal helps desk **+91-80-46010000 or +91-8068948777** or email to **support@eprochelpdesk.com**

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Ele., (C,O&M), Bangalore South Circle, MA Bhavan, 3rd Floor, NT Road, Bangalore-560 001.

For Electricity related complaints call : 1912
Download BESCOM Mithra Mobile APP.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026

MISERS ARE NO FUN TO LIVE WITH, BUT THEY MAKE GREAT ANCESTORS — TOM SNYDER

MERYL STREEP AND ANNE HATHAWAY ON CHAOS WHILE FILMING 'THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA 2' : 'WE NEEDED POLICE BARRIERS'

RYAN GOSLING SAYS SAVING THEATRES IS FILMMAKERS' JOB, NOT FANS': 'MUST SAVE CINEMAS BY MAKING BETTER MOVIES'

Iran sees US peace plan as 'one-sided' as Trump raises stakes with oil threat

Make A Deal Or Continue Getting Hit: Trump To Iran

Dubai/Washington: A US proposal for ending nearly four weeks of fighting is "one-sided and unfair", a senior Iranian official told Reuters on Thursday, while US President Donald Trump said Iran must make a deal or face a continued onslaught.

The Iranian official said the proposal, conveyed to Tehran by Pakistan, "was reviewed in detail on Wednesday night by senior Iranian officials and the representative of Iran's Supreme Leader".

It lacked the minimum requirements for success and served only the interests of the US and Israel, the official said, while stressing that diplomacy had not ended despite the lack for now of a realistic plan for peace talks.

Trump described the Iranians as "great negotiators" but added that he was not sure he was "willing to make a deal with them to end the war".

AFP

Women protest at a rally organised by Lebanese political parties outside the Iranian embassy in Beirut on Thursday. The protest was against Lebanese govt's decision to expel Iran's ambassador to Lebanon

During a cabinet meeting at the White House, he said, "They now have the chance, that is Iran, to abandon their nuclear ambitions and to join a new path forward." "We'll see if they want to do it. If they don't, we're their worst nightmare. In the meantime, we'll just keep blowing them away," the US president added.

Trump, who is expected to send thousands of troops to West Asia, driving expectations of a ground invasion, also said taking control of Iran's oil was an option but gave no further details. A note seen by Reuters on Tuesday to the UN from Iran said "non-hostile vessels" could transit the strait if they coordinated with Iranian authorities.

A Thai oil tanker has passed through the strait following diplomatic coordination with Iran, and Malaysia said its vessels were also being allowed to transit in a sign that curbswere loosening for some countries. Iran would be receptive to request from Spain related to the strait, its embassy in Madrid said, in the first such offer to an EU state.

US special envoy Steve Witkoff confirmed that the US had sent a "15-point action list" as a basis for negotiations to end the war. Pakistan's foreign minister said "indirect talks" between the US and Iran were taking place through messages relayed by Islamabad, with other states including Turkiye and Egypt also supporting mediation efforts. Any talks, were they to happen, would likely prove very difficult given the positions laid out by both sides.

On Thursday, Iran launched multiple waves of missiles at Israel, striking Tel Aviv, Haifa and other areas, including a Palestinian town in central Israel. At least one ballistic missile hit Tel Aviv, according to the military, while others carried cluster munitions that dispersed smaller explosives, damaging homes and cars. Israel's ambulance service said a man was killed in Nahariya after Hezbollah fired a rocket barrage at the northern city.

In Iran, strikes hit a residential zone in the city of Bandar Abbas and a village on the outskirts of the city of Shiraz, where two teenage brothers were killed, Iran's Tasnim news agency said. REUTERS

Trump: Iran allowed 10 Pak-flagged tankers Hormuz passage as goodwill gesture for talks

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that Iran was letting 10 oil tankers transit the Strait of Hormuz as an apparent goodwill gesture in negotiations. Trump made the comments at a Cabinet meeting in the White House, elaborating on what he had previously described as a "present" from Iran. "They said, to show you the fact that we're real and solid and we're there, we're going to let you have eight boats of oil, eight boats, eight big boats of oil," Trump said. "I guess they were right, and they were real, and I think they were Pakistani-flagged... It ended up being 10 boats." Trump on Tuesday had baffled some observers when he said that Iran had given the US an expensive, energy-related concession. At the time, he declined to say what exactly he meant. REUTERS

STRAIT OF HORMUZ: HOW THINGS STAND

Here are key facts and figures about the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial shipping route virtually paralysed by the US-Israel-Iran war since Feb 28

Iran has approved 26 ships
Recent crossings appeared to have used a route apparently approved by Iran around Larak Island, dubbed the 'Tehran toll booth' by shipping journal Lloyd's List. The journal said Wednesday it had tracked more than 26 ships using the corridor. No ships tracked using transponder data had crossed the Strait of Hormuz using the regular route since March 15

Jeepney drivers protest over rising fuel prices in Philippines

95% shipping drop | Just two vessels were detected crossing the strait heading west on Thursday. The channel typically sees around 120 daily transits, according to Lloyd's List. From March 1 to 26, commodities carriers made just 158 crossings, according to analytics firm Kpler — decrease of 95%. Of these, 100 were by oil tankers and gas carriers, and most were travelling east. More than 43% of the crossings have been by ships under US, EU or UK sanctions, according to an AFP analysis. Of the crossings by oil and gas tankers, 56% were by sanctioned vessels

No incidents reported since March 22
Since March 1, 24 commercial vessels, including 11 tankers, have been attacked or reported incidents in the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz or the Gulf of Oman, according to the UK naval maritime security agency UKMTO. No incidents have been reported since Sunday, according to the UKMTO

8 sea workers killed
Since the conflict began, at least eight seafarers or dock workers have died in incidents in the region, according to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). A further four remained missing, and 10 were injured. Around 20,000 seafarers are affected in the region, according to the IMO

Source: AFP, Reuters

Iran charging fees to ships to safely transit Strait of Hormuz: Official

Dubai: The secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council says Iran is charging fees for ships to safely transit the Strait of Hormuz. Jasem Mohamed al-Budaiwi is the first top official to accuse Iran of charging for safe passage through the strait. Al-Budaiwi oversees the bloc of six Gulf Arab nations including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

The Fars and Tasnim news agencies, both close to Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, quoted lawmaker Mohammadreza Rezaei Kouchi as saying that parliament was working to formalise the process of charging fees to let ships pass. "We provide its security, and it is natural that ships and oil tankers should pay such fees," he was quoted as saying.

Lloyd's List Intelligence called it a "de facto 'toll booth' regime". "While not all ships are paying a direct toll, at least two vessels have and the payment is settled in yuan," it said. AP

Iran naval commander overseeing blockade of Hormuz killed: Israel

Yeganeh Torbati

The the commander of the naval forces of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, **Alireza Tangsiri**, is the latest senior Iranian military figure targeted by Israel in its month-long bombardment of Iran.

Tangsiri had been leading Iran's successful effort to close the Strait of Hormuz to almost all shipping traffic, causing serious economic disruption worldwide and raising the cost of the Iran campaign for the US, Israel's partner in the war. Israel said it had killed Tangsiri in a strike on Thursday; Iran has not commented.

It was not immediately clear what effect Tangsiri's death would have on Iran's Strait of Hormuz strategy. Iran said earlier this week it would allow "non-hostile" ship traffic through the narrow waterway.

AFP

An Israeli howitzer artillery gun fires rounds towards southern Lebanon from a position in upper Galilee in northern Israel near the border, Thursday

Tangsiri oversaw the navy's testing of drones and cruise missiles, according to the US treasury, which imposed sanctions on him in 2019 and again in 2023. He also chaired the board of a company that manufactured and tested drones for the navy. The commander of US Central Command, adm. Brad Cooper, said Thursday Tangsiri's killing "makes the region safer".

Tangsiri had become a vocal presence on social media in recent weeks. He used his account on X to give updates on ships that Iran had refused to allow through the strait; to threaten US-linked oil facilities; and warn the US not to attack Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export hub.

Tangsiri was chosen to head the Revolutionary Guards' naval force by Iran's former supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in 2018, and was known for his aggressive statements asserting Iranian dominance over the Strait of Hormuz. NYT

'Israel took Iran's Araqchi, Qalibaf off hit list on Pak request to US'

Islamabad: Israel removed Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araqchi and parliamentary speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf from its hit list after Pakistan urged the US to press Israel not to target them, a Pakistani source with knowledge of the discussions said on Thursday.

"The Israelis had their coordinates and wanted to take them out, we told the US if they are also eliminated then there is no one else to talk to, hence the US asked the Israelis to back off," the source said.

Wall Street Journal first reported that the two top Iranian officials had been temporarily removed from Israel's list of officials to eliminate as they explore possible peace talks. The two officials have been removed from the list for up to four or five days, WSJ said, citing US officials, but did not mention any Pakistani role in it. Pakistan, Egypt and Turkiye are mediating between Iran and the US to end the war. REUTERS

Indian among 2 killed in UAE by debris of intercepted missiles

An Indian national was among two killed in the UAE Thursday when debris of missiles intercepted by the country's air defence system fell on a street in the capital Abu Dhabi, local media reported.

The second person killed in the incident is a Pakistani national, while the three injured also included an Indian

The Indian embassy in the UAE expressed its "deepest condolences" over the death. "The embassy is closely coordinating with the UAE authorities to render all possible support and assistance," it wrote on X. The second person killed in the incident is a Pakistani national, while the three injured also included an Indian, Abu Dhabi Media Office reported.

The UAE's air defences are responding to incoming missile and drone threats from Iran at regular intervals, according to the UAE's ministry of defence. "Abu Dhabi authorities have responded to an incident involving falling debris in Sweihan street, following the successful interception of a ballistic missile by air defence systems," Abu Dhabi media office posted on social media.

"The incident has resulted in the deaths of two individuals of Pakistani and Indian nationality, and in injuries ranging from serious to moderate sustained by three individuals of Emirati, Jordanian and Indian nationality."

The total number of deaths has risen to 11 after the latest incident in Abu Dhabi. The UAE air defences systems on Thursday engaged 15 ballistic missiles and 11 UAVs launched from Iran, the ministry said. Since the start of the war, UAE air defences have engaged 372 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles and 1,826 UAVs.

"The attacks resulted in the martyrdom of 2 members of the armed forces, in addition to the martyrdom of a Moroccan civilian..., as well as 8 fatalities of Pakistani, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Palestinian and Indian nationalities," it said. PTI

Pressure mounts on US Congress to end funding shutdown

Washington: Pressure is mounting on US Congress to end the funding shutdown that has resulted in travel disruptions, missed paychecks and even warnings of airport closures, but lawmakers have yet to resolve the underlying issue of reining in Trump's immigration enforcement operations. Senators intend to vote Thursday on a Republican proposal that would fund the Transportation Security Administration and much of DHS, except the enforcement and removal operations conducted by ICE agents. That plan is expected to fail.

Democrats argue it does not go far enough at putting guardrails on federal officers, particularly after deaths of two Americans in Minneapolis. Trump has threatened to send National Guard to airports, in addition to deployment of ICE agents. With Congress set to leave town by week's end, calls are intensifying for an end to the 41-day stalemate that's put the livelihoods of TSA officers at risk as they provide airport security without pay.

Multiple airports are experiencing over 40% callout rates of TSA workers and nearly 500 of its nearly 50,000 officers have quit during the shutdown. AP

'US links security guarantees to Kyiv giving up Donbas'

The US is making its offer of security guarantees for a peace deal in Ukraine conditional on Kyiv ceding all of the country's eastern region of Donbas to Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.

With the US focused on its own conflict with Iran, President Trump is applying pressure to Ukraine in an effort to bring a quick end to the four-year war, Zelensky said. "The Middle East (West Asia) definitely has an impact on President Trump, and I think on his next steps." Russian special envoy Kirill Dmitriev said Zelensky's comments "can't help but make us happy".

Meanwhile, Zelensky arrived in Saudi Arabia Thursday as two countries are set to sign a deal on "security cooperation", later in the day. AGENCIES

After wooing Trump, Pak gets a seat at the table

David Yaffe-Bellany, Ben Protess and Elian Peltier

At President Trump's inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington last month, his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, unveiled a promising new partnership with Pakistan. It was not a governmental decree against terrorism or war. Rather, it was an unorthodox real estate deal involving a shuttered hotel in Midtown Manhattan.

A former real estate developer now assigned to negotiate peace around the world, Witkoff brokered the unusual arrangement between the US and Pakistani govts to explore the redevelopment of the Roosevelt Hotel, a once glamorous building that Pakistan owns.

While the Trump administration has not made the terms of the deal public, a White House official briefed on the matter described it as a potentially lucrative partnership between the two govts to co-own the property.

The charm campaign elevated Pakistan's standing in Washington in the lead-up to the conflict. And Pakistan, which shares a 565-mile border with Iran, is now playing a potentially central role in the halting effort to bring about a ceasefire and a peace deal.

It is a striking rise in station for Pakistan, which little more than a year ago was a diplomatic afterthought in Washington. But since Trump returned to office, the Pakistanis have lavished praise on the president, hired lobbyists tied to his family and even nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. They also struck a series of business deals that mimicked the administration's own transactional approach to foreign policy.

Like Trump, Kushner and Witkoff emerged from the back-scratching world of New York real estate, an experience that influenced their diplomatic undertakings.

Trump's Board of Peace embodies that worldview. The board has become a forum for commerce, requiring a $1 billion fee for countries to gain membership, making it a natural venue to roll out the Roosevelt Hotel deal.

Pakistan formed its alliance with World Liberty last spring when Witkoff's son Zach travelled to Islamabad for meetings.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Pakistani finance minister, was there for the deal announcement. A month later, Aurangzeb met with the elder Witkoff at the Board of Peace meeting, where the Roosevelt Hotel deal took flight. The property was shut down during the pandemic and briefly reopened as a migrant shelter.

Now, the Pakistani govt wants to demolish the hotel to develop a new high-rise tower — and it sought Witkoff's help. The deal is a non-binding collaboration between Pakistan and the General Services Administration (GSA), the federal agency that typically buys, builds and manages office space for other agencies.

The next steps are unclear. Pakistan is looking to retain a stake in the property but wants to redevelop it with a partner, according to Muhammad Ali, chairman of Pakistani govt's privatisation commission. In an interview in Islamabad, Ali said he did not know whether the US might remain involved in the project, but said the partnership with the GSA was "one big plus" that gave Pakistan "more credibility." NYT

Former B'desh intelligence chief arrested

Dhaka: A second former high-ranking Bangladeshi army official linked to the 2007 military-backed caretaker govt — which had now-PM Tarique Rahman jailed, leading to his 17-year exile in the UK — has been arrested, reports **Ahsan Tasnim**.

Former intelligence chief Lt Gen (retd) Sheikh Mamun Khaled was produced before a court by Dhaka Metropolitan Detective Branch (DB) over the killing of a trader during '2024 July Uprising', according to police. Khaled, who became a part of the Hasina-led Awami League in 2008, also faces allegations such as amassing illegal wealth and orchestrating controversial "militant drama" narratives as directorate's chief, sources said.

Pak, Af fighting resumes as truce ends, 2 killed

Kabul: Renewed fighting erupted between Afghanistan and Pakistan on Wednesday after a temporary ceasefire expired, killing at least two civilians and wounding others in eastern Afghanistan, Afghan Taliban officials said.

The truce had been announced by the two sides ahead of Eid holiday. An official in Afghanistan's Kunar province said Pakistani forces fired dozens of shells into Narai and Sarkano districts, killing two civilians and wounding eight others after the truce expired. Afghan forces returned fire, he said, claiming they destroyed three military posts and killed one person. His claims could not be verified. There was no comment yet from Pakistan. REUTERS

Ex-rapper Balen Shah, 35, to take oath as Nepal PM today

Vishant.Agarwala
@timesofindia.com

Balendra "Balen" Shah, 35, is set to take oath as Nepal's prime minister on Friday, coinciding with Ram Navami as observed in the Himalayan country. It would put one of the world's youngest PMs in office and mark a dramatic rise for the rapper-turned-politician who forged his political career taking on Singha Durbar, the Himalayan nation's seat of power.

Shah, the former Kathmandu mayor who repeatedly clashed with Singha Durbar and cast it as the symbol of the city's political frustrations, is set to govern from the same complex. It's a striking turn for a politician who built his profile by accusing the federal establishment of obstructing Kathmandu's right to govern itself.

Few episodes captured the conflict as starkly as Shah's Sept 2023 post after police stopped a Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC) vehicle carrying his wife on a public holiday. Shah wrote: "...if any of our KMC vehicles are stopped by the govt (in future), I will set Singha Durbar on fire." He later deleted the post, but the remark captured the confrontational style that made him a national figure. In Sept 2025, when Singha Durbar was indeed set on fire during the Gen Z uprising, the KP Sharma Oli govt accused KMC of not sending firefighters on time. Shah rejected the charge.

But his confrontations have extended beyond Singha Durbar. During the "Adipurush" row in June 2023 — a dialogue in the film refers to Sita as the "daughter of India", a reference many in Nepal protested as they believe Sita was born in that country's Janakpur — Shah banned the screening of Indian films in Kathmandu and refused to comply with a court order. That defiance strengthened his image among supporters, while critics saw in it the same impulsiveness that could become a liability in higher office.

That is why Shah's move to the federal complex is more than a political promotion. "Ultimately, his real test will not be in his decisions, but in his perspective... Will he weaken institutions in the charm of popularity, or strengthen institutions to make his popularity enduring?" a columnist wrote.

PRIME MINISTERS BY AGE OF 40

Person	Country	Age at that time
William Pitt the Younger	UK	24.6 (1783)
Sebastian Kurz*	Austria	31.3 (2017)
Waldemar Pawlak	Poland	32.8 (1992)
Sanna Marin	Finland	34.1 (2019)
Oleksiy Honcharuk	Ukraine	35.2 (2019)
Benazir Bhutto	Pakistan	35.5 (1988)
Zhan Videnov	Bulgaria	35.9 (1995)
Philip Dimitrov	Bulgaria	36.6 (1991)
Kristrun Frostadottir	Iceland	36.6 (2024)
Chris Watson	Australia	37.1 (1904)
Jacinda Ardern	New Zealand	37.3 (2017)
Simon Harris#	Ireland	37.5 (2024)
Paetongtarn Shinawatra	Thailand	38 (2024)
Juri Ratas	Estonia	38.4 (2016)
Leo Varadkar#	Ireland	38.4 (2017)
Sergey Stanishev	Bulgaria	39.3 (2005)
Joseph Clark	Canada	40 (1979)

* Chancellor, equivalent to PM, # Taoiseach, equivalent to PM

WORLD DIGEST

A video grab shows Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko (R) watching as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un holds a rifle gifted to him by Lukashenko in Pyongyang. North Korea and Belarus's strongmen leaders signed a 'friendship and cooperation' treaty on Thursday after Kim Jong Un gave a lavish welcome to Lukashenko on his maiden visit

Bus plunges into river in B'desh, leaves 26 dead

At least 26 people died after a passenger bus carrying around 50 passengers plunged into the Padma river while attempting to board a ferry in Bangladesh, officials said on Thursday. The accident occurred on Wednesday afternoon when the bus lost control approaching a ferry at Daulatdia in Rajbari district, about 100 km from capital Dhaka. The bus overturned and sank nearly 30 feet into the river, according officials. The bus was travelling to Dhaka from the southwestern district of Kushtia as people return to work after celebrating Eid. An official said many of the passengers swam to safety after the accident but others got trapped. It was not clear if there was still anyone missing. Eleven women and five children were among the dead, according to officials

Open AI pauses plans to release erotic chatbot
OpenAI has shelved plans to release an erotic chatbot indefinitely as it looks to focus on its core products, according to a report by Financial Times Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter. Employees and investors have raised concerns about the effect of sexualised AI content on society, the report said. OpenAI has also abruptly canceled Sora, a text-to-video model, and is now looking to focus on other research areas and rolling out more of its capabilities into a single super-app.

S Africa: Disinvited from G7 by France under US pressure
South Africa's presidency said on Thursday that France had withdrawn an invitation to the G7 leaders' summit in June due to sustained pressure from the US, including a threat to boycott the summit. The decision was communicated to Pretoria by the French embassy about two weeks ago, said Vincent Magwenya, a spokesperson for South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. French officials denied the claim, saying Kenya had been invited instead of S Africa ahead of President Emmanuel Macron's visit there later this year.

CONTRAPUNTO

Even if I look at other people's social media
I feel addiction creeping up on me

– KRIS MARSHALL

Spare The Ships

Iran, Ukraine, US have all targeted merchant shipping. That sets a dangerous pattern for global economy

After 16 cargo ships, including oil tankers, were hit within the first two weeks of Iran war, hundreds more dropped anchor in the Gulf, unwilling to risk vessel, cargo, and lives. There they remain, stranded. Meanwhile, oil, gas, fertiliser, aluminium, sulphur, helium, and many more commodities, have become scarce. This is Iran waging war by other means – holding maritime trade to ransom. In the north, *Reuters* estimates, Ukraine has disabled 40% of Russia's oil export apparatus. Its attacks on ports and pipelines have reduced Russian oil flows by 2mn barrels a day – more than a third of India's daily consumption. European seizures of Russia's "shadow fleet" tankers have further thinned the flow. While all of these moves can be rationalised, their impact on the world is hard to justify.

It is a settled point that merchant ships, unless involved in military operations, should not be attacked. That's because ships are what keeps the modern world running. Trade makes up roughly 60% of global GDP; ships handle over 80% of goods trade. And attacks on just a few vessels can effectively shut down entire routes. We're seeing this in Hormuz Strait now, but it happened in Red Sea not long ago. A Houthi attack on tanker Marlin Luanda, and seizure of car carrier Galaxy Legend, forced shipping firms to change course. Two years have passed, but Red Sea traffic hasn't returned to normal. Meanwhile, freight costs have risen due to longer routes.

We have, perhaps, forgotten the consequences of targeting merchant ships in war. Britain lost 2,426 merchant ships in WW2, US 1,768. Japan, which had built up the third largest fleet of passenger and cargo ships before the war, lost 2,346. By the time war ended, it was left without a single ship of over 1,000-tonne capacity. At that time, only militaries had capabilities to sink large vessels, now it's a lot easier. Iran, Ukraine, and the Houthis, have demonstrated destructive capabilities of cheap drones, worth a few thousand dollars each. The havoc that states and state-sponsored bad actors can wreak is obvious. So, steps to build a new consensus on the safety of maritime trade are needed. Ordinarily, US would be expected to take the lead, but its actions against Venezuelan tankers in Jan cast doubt on this possibility. Developing nations, which suffer the most when commodities become scarce, and prices rise, must therefore take a stand on freedom of merchant and commercial vessels.

Big Tech, Big Takedown

Social media comeuppance begins. Companies must correct design choices that hurt children

Say what you will about social media companies, they never stop innovating. It's their basic survival reflex. Finally, though, establishing the harms that they do, has also taken an ingenious route, and it's worked! This effort used to be foiled, again and again, by the free speech argument. And by the US safe harbour provision, which protects intermediaries from being held liable for what their users post. But in the KGM vs Meta & YouTube case, plaintiffs sidestepped traditional First Amendment conversations. They reframed social media harm as a product liability issue. They persuaded the California jury that both companies "built machines designed to addict the brains of children, and they did it on purpose".

And in a second case, a New Mexico jury has been persuaded that Meta violated state consumer protection laws, by failing to safeguard child users from child predators. True, both rulings will be appealed. Also true, their punitive damages are peanuts to companies with market caps running into trillions of $s. But what will worry them is what's down the road – around 10,000 personal injury cases, 800 school district lawsuits, and actions from attorneys general from 40 states. That's in US alone. Bulwarks have, obviously, also been opened to recognise addiction as a reason for punitive damages, on a global basis.

This could prove to be Big Tech's tobacco moment. Internal corporate documents have shown, social media companies well know how harmful certain design choices are, and *choose* these, to drive growth and profit. KGM's longest day of Instagram use ran into 16 hours. The like button that registers like a chemical hit, the beauty filters, the infinite scroll and autoplay…entice other kids to do the same. But when these companies hurt in the only place they really care about, their pockets, they will be pushed to make better choices. Less virality bias, for example, would really help children. Slow down the spread of emotionally extreme content.

Timed out

That's what happened to me when my watch stopped working, and was sent off to be fixed

Jug Suraiya

A few weeks ago, I ran out of time, literally. My watch suddenly stopped working, and had to be sent off for repairs.

I've had my watch for more than 25 years, helping me to figure out when I had to do what, like when to go to sleep, and when to wake up, and when to eat, and so on.

I hadn't realised how much I relied on it, like an explorer in the wild depends on a compass, to figure out which direction is which, and act as a navigational aid, without which one would be clueless about one's whereabouts. And that's exactly how I felt without my watch, not about my whereabouts, but about my whenabouts.

Outside time went on like business as usual. America and Israel carried on hammer and tongs, munitions and missiles, against Iran. Here, govt and opposition did much the same, except using bombast instead of bombs.

Time went on for everyone else, but it eluded me. It left me wondering not only when to eat or to sleep, but even about when was when.

Bunny told me not to be silly. I could always tell the time from my mobile phone, which was more accurate than any watch, but it wasn't the same thing. Mostly I don't know where I've left my mobile, and besides, it's not become almost an anatomical extension of me.

jugular*vein*

I thought of Henri Bergson, who got a Nobel Prize for saying that the linear, measured, tick-tock time of clocks and watches was all rot and rubbish – only Nobel Prize winners don't say things like rot and rubbish, but instead say things like mechanistic reductionism – and invented something called duration, which is like a seamless melody being played inside one's consciousness.

I tried substituting duration for my missing watch. It didn't work. No seamless melody. Not even muzak.

Then – happy day! – my watch came back, repaired and on the job again. I put it on, and all was right with my world again. But I might as well face it. No one's ever going to give me a Nobel Prize.

Why Trump's Peace Plan Is In Pieces

He's got to understand he can't dictate terms to war-hardened Iran. Tehran's new leaders should know their strategy – endure & hope Trump gets fed up – is high-risk. No one knows how this impasse will end

Rouzbeh Parsi

Iran Expert, Lund Univ, Sweden

Trump's latest attempt at a peace plan was a list of demands tantamount to Iran's unconditional surrender. It requires Tehran to dismantle not only its nuclear enrichment programme, but also its ballistic missile arsenal, and network of regional alliances. For a country whose air force is obsolete, and whose supreme leader was just killed by Washington's ally Tel Aviv, ballistic missiles are the last line of conventional deterrence.

Demanding Iran give them up, was asking it to commit strategic suicide. Tehran didn't accept, and Washington, surely, knew that – because we have been here before.

In May 2018, two weeks after Trump pulled US out of the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) restricting Iran's nuclear enrichment programme, his secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, presented twelve demands to Iran. Europeans, in particular, hoped that even though Trump had just destroyed their signature diplomatic achievement, he would offer a credible alternative path. He did no such thing.

Pompeo's demands on Iran included a complete halt to enrichment, full IAEA access to all sites, withdrawal from Syria, end of support to Hezbollah and Hamas, and dismantlement of its ballistic missile programme.

As was noted at the time, it amounted to asking for everything while offering nothing – a formula that could only be read in Tehran as a demand for unconditional surrender.

Predictably, Iran, then too, had rejected the list out of hand. What followed was years of escalating uranium enrichment, inept Europeans' hand-wringing, and a steady drift towards the very confrontation JCPOA had been designed to prevent.

In 2025-26, the pattern is repeating against a grimmer backdrop. After negotiations stalled in spring of 2025, Israel and US attacked and destroyed several key Iranian nuclear installations. Trump declared Iran's nuclear programme had been obliterated. Negotiations resumed by autumn, but basic parameters hadn't changed. Washington's demands remained essentially the same as Pompeo's list: repackaged, but no less maximalist.

A major reason for the ineptitude of Washington's negotiating effort is that the two men in charge – Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff – owe their positions to personal proximity to Trump, rather than any expertise in nuclear matters. Result is a negotiating team that doesn't fully understand, what is being negotiated.

Concessions from Tehran have gone unnoticed, or been misunderstood, and when talks failed to produce the dramatic capitulation Washington expected, the response was to try regime change – again.

The regime change gambit was, undoubtedly, encouraged by the massive popular protests that erupted in Iran, Dec 2025 and Jan 2026. Iran's security apparatus has a long history of ruthlessly cracking down on such protests. But, Washington and Tel Aviv seem to take a gamble – Tehran's unprecedented killing of several thousand protesters in Jan, would weaken it, to the point of being ripe for toppling. That brutality notwithstanding, Islamic Republic's grip on power, and its ability to defend itself has, so far, repeatedly, been underestimated.

Image: AI

Indeed, the war has hardened Iran's political establishment, rather than weakened it. Khamenei's killing probably made his son's ascension to the position much easier. The appointment of Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr as secretary of Supreme National Security Council, sends an unmistakable signal. Zolghadr is a very hawkish hardliner, a former deputy commander of IRGC. That he succeeded a political figure like Larijani, killed in an Israeli strike Mar 17, tells us something crucial – Iran's response to American pressure, is not to moderate, but to further militarise its decision-making. This is the opposite of what Trump's war intended.

A fundamental asymmetry of purpose between the warring parties creates both political confusion, and delusion. Iran knows what it wants: survival, followed by negotiations from a position of undeniable strength. Its strategy, however costly, has logic – endure, strike back, raise the price for everyone, until, US decides the war's not worth it.

Trump's objectives, by contrast, shift with each interview, and speech. Regime change, one day, enrichment caps the next, a grand bargain, the day after. His peace plan is unrealistic because it ignores how this war has played out, and because it does not define any priorities.

It provides less a diplomatic opening for negotiations, and more of an ultimatum. The problem? Tehran's willing to continue the war, and bear the cost. Trump's under pressure from all sides, to define what he really wants, and find a way out of the quagmire he created.

Tehran has already denied there've been negotiations (but not necessarily communication), and rejected the equivalent of a reheated microwave dinner, that Trump calls a peace plan.

The problem, for both parties, is that, in the end, both do need to get out of this impasse, and preferably such that future conflict is avoided. Tehran's gamble – fighting until Trump learns the lesson once and for all – is a high-risk attempt. Even if this succeeds, Iran's leadership might then overplay its hand in ensuing negotiations.

What all of this points to is that the negotiation process that led to JCPOA was the optimal one – all parties were forced to focus on the singular issue in contention, and all of them, learnt through the slog of systematic and relentless negotiations, exactly, how much they had overestimated their own strength, and underestimated their opponent's.

But, does Trump's administration have the capacity to understand it cannot dictate terms? That it needs a negotiation team that actually knows how to do the job? No one knows.

Walk With The People, Would You, Collector Saab?

IAS officers must prioritise field visits. Experiencing firsthand how villagers live, and understanding their problems face-to-face, is what makes an admin not just efficient, but also meaningful

Duvvuri Subbarao

Telangana CM, Revanth Reddy, has urged district collectors to spend, at least, ten days every month, on field visits. If collectors actually "dirtied their hands", CM held, welfare impact could well exceed that of hundreds of crores spent on development schemes.

Because, seeing is believing.

Early in my IAS career, on a village tour, I recall sitting, under a neem tree, with a group of tribal farmers. The headman was explaining why a breach in the irrigation tank, sanctioned months earlier, had still not been repaired. The file in my office recorded the scheme as "under implementation". Villagers laughed when I mentioned that phrase. The contractor had visited just once, taken measurements, and disappeared since. The irrigation tank existed only in govt paperwork.

That was my first exposure to the difference between administration on paper and reality on the ground.

As sub-collector of Parvathipuram in north-coastal Andhra, a vast subdivision with over a thousand villages, tribal tracts, hills, and plains, I had arrived on my first posting, mid-1970s, with more enthusiasm than experience. The learning curve was steep; the only way to climb it was by touring villages, by jeep when possible, and on foot, when that was the only option.

After an exhausting day of trekking to several tribal hamlets, I returned to the inspection bungalow for 'night camp'. When a senior officer later asked me if I had ever camped overnight in a tribal village, I sheepishly admitted I had chosen the comfort of the bungalow. He was disappointed. His point was simple: unless you experience people's lives, as they live them, your understanding will remain secondhand.

Fieldwork also taught me that experiencing a problem face-to-face is a lot different from reading about it in a file. Once, a group of anxious villagers rushed in, end of workday, to report that a tiger had been running amok around their village. It had already carried away livestock, and even an infant. I assured them I would act – privately worrying what exactly a greenhorn sub-collector was supposed to do about a tiger that had trespassed into human habitat.

Nearly five decades later, I returned to Parvathipuram on a quiet, private visit to see how things had changed. Towards the end of the trip, I called on Bhawna, a young IAS officer who was then the sub-collector – my successor forty-six years apart.

As we chatted, I asked how often she toured outside HQ. Her reply was candid. "Sir, I'd like to go out more, but I am always on call. But never mind. Administration, today, is far different from your time. I get to know what's happening from videos my staff send me. I can check any situation, in real time, and conference with all my staff at once. It's more efficient than visiting village by village."

Uday Deb

She had a point. Tech has transformed governance. Today a district officer can monitor events across the district from a smartphone – something unimaginable in 1970s.

Yet, tech is no substitute for lived experience. Seeing a situation with your own eyes brings context, nuance, and empathy that no video clip can convey. When you sit in a village home, walk along a breached irrigation canal, or visit a school unannounced, you notice things that reports cannot capture.

RBI, where I served as governor, is staffed by exceptionally capable professionals, but they have little field exposure. To address this, we began outreach visits to villages, countrywide. Policies discussed in conference rooms suddenly acquired a human face. Conversations with rural borrowers, banking correspondents, and micro-entrepreneurs revealed gaps between policy intent, and ground reality, that would never have been discovered otherwise.

There's another reason why IAS officers must prioritise field experience.

IAS's organising principle is that, at the top of the policy-making pyramid, breadth of experience matters more than narrow domain expertise. Policymakers must absorb the advice of specialists and blend it with an understanding of how India actually works.

Imagine, for example, the challenge of improving administration of employment guarantee scheme. A professor of rural development may have written dozens of scholarly papers on the subject. But an IAS officer who has spent years 'experiencing' villages – watching how job cards are issued, how muster rolls are maintained, and how payments reach workers – will have a far better sense of what needs fixing.

Wisdom from field experience is, in fact, the unique value proposition of IAS. It gives the service an edge, in senior policy roles, over technocrats, and indeed, over other civil services. If IAS officers retreat into offices, meetings, and dashboards, they risk forfeiting the very qualification that makes them 'premier'.

Which brings us back to CM's advice to his collectors. Ten days of field visits every month may sound demanding. In reality, it may be the most valuable investment of a district collector's time. Development schemes may be designed in secretariats and sanctioned in budgets, but their success or failure is decided on the front lines.

A collector who sits in the office may run an efficient administration. A collector who walks the fields, talks to people, and sees problems firsthand, will run a meaningful one.

The writer is a former RBI governor

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred*space*

Those who take shelter under Me in this world, meditating on Me and repeating the Mantra of My sacred name, will surely get My vision, even unasked, as I know they have no other refuge.

Thus Spake Sri Ram

Ram Navami: Look Beyond Identities, Rediscover Purpose

Discourse: Chanchalapathi Dasa

Ram Navami, the auspicious appearance day of Sri Ram, is not only a celebration of a divine birth but also a reminder of a way of living rooted in dharm, courage, and surrender.

Rama says that if even once a devotee offers himself in surrender, saying, "O Ram, i am yours. I am your servant; i want to live by your instructions. I want to remember you always," then such a person is accepted by Ram completely.

He assures that when someone surrenders and prays with sincerity, he grants them fearlessness. This is his vow. In the material world, we constantly face challenges and fearful situations. And ultimately, we all must face death alone. It is a deeply personal, individual experience. No one accompanies us at that moment. Therefore, we must learn to become fearless. This assurance from Ram becomes our shelter. If we remember his pastimes, his *lila*, his message, and his extraordinary character as the ideal for human life, then gradually our consciousness becomes filled with Ram, and he protects us under all circumstances.

We come into this world with a body made of *panchbhutas*. We also have a *sukshm sharir*, consisting of *manas*, which thinks and creates ideas and emotions. *Buddhi*, which gives directions to our bodily actions. And *ahamkaar*, which gives a sense of wrong identity to the self.

THE SPEAKING TREE

After we are born, grow up, and as we become older, more intelligent and mature, we set out with our army of senses, mind, and intellect to pursue our own intent to lord over the world. We are driven by the thought process – 'i've come into this world, i have this panchbhuta sharir, tribut sharir and sukshm sharir, to whom does all this belong? Am i the owner of all this? Am i the owner of this body and the owner of the senses?' But is that the truth? An alternative understanding emerges, this body does not belong to me, these senses are not mine, even my existence is not independent.

Hrishikena hrishikesha-sevanam bhaktir ucyate – everything belongs to the Supreme, Sri Ram. Whatever strength we have, whatever abilities we possess, everything is his. And we, too, belong to him. Therefore, the purpose of body, mind, and senses is not for our enjoyment, but for his service.

To think that 'the senses are mine for my pleasure' is ignorance. To understand that everything belongs to the Lord, that is true knowledge. Scriptures teach that the Lord is the ultimate owner of everything, from the smallest to the greatest. When we live in service, we live in surrender. And in that surrender, we find our ultimate refuge.

Ram Navami, therefore, is more than a festival. It is a reminder to look beyond temporary identities and rediscover a deeper connection with purpose and responsibility.

The writer is vice-chairman and co-mentor, Hare Krishna Movement & president, Vrindavan Heritage Tower

Fleeing war in West Asia, but not without their pets

Amid fighting in the region, Indian pet owners are navigating airline rules, paperwork and time pressures to ensure their furry friends make it back home with them, no matter the cost

Sharmila.Ganesan@timesofindia.com

Perched on a worn, brown bean bag, Sterling looks entirely at home in Pune — though he arrived only two days ago. The same bean bag — his favourite throne — travelled with the nine-year-old visually impaired Labrador retriever inside a cargo crate on his recent flight from Dubai. He flew as "excess baggage", before emerging at a baggage collection bay at Mumbai airport, tail wagging, to be reunited with his owner, Ketki Bhosale.

Having adopted Sterling in Pune almost a decade ago, Bhosale was especially anxious about relocating him, given his blindness. As tensions escalated in West Asia, she reached out to a relocation firm in India. "I could never imagine leaving him behind," she says. "He has given me more than I could ever give him."

Sterling is among the fortunate ones. As Indians leave the conflict-hit region in waves, animal rescue groups in Dubai report a surge in abandoned pets — dogs tied to poles, cats left behind in vacated apartments, rabbits released in parks, and animals placed in cartons with apologetic notes. Shelters are now overflowing, as permits, vaccinations and health checks can take weeks.

Closer home, relocation firms are witnessing what one calls a "10x surge" in requests. What is typically a carefully planned process is now compressed into days, as pet parents navigate a maze of airline rules, documentation, flight cancellations and rising costs.

> The thought of leaving a pet behind due to logistical barriers is something most families simply cannot cope with...
>
> —VARUN SIDDHARTHA
> FOUNDER, AIRPETS

"The thought of leaving a pet behind due to logistical barriers is something most families simply cannot cope with," says Varun Siddhartha, founder of AirPets, who says his team is receiving over 200 emails a day. "We have seen people crying because they genuinely believe they may have to choose between getting to safety and staying with their pet."

The distress is often heightened for families with elderly or medically fragile animals, or children already under stress. "In those situations, the pet becomes the emotional centre of the household," he adds.

Pet relocation is typically planned months in advance. "In this situation, most people didn't have that luxury," Siddhartha says. Frequent flight cancellations have made matters worse. "Securing confirmed bookings for pets has become extremely difficult."

Chashmi Aggarwal, who returned to Delhi from Dubai with her pet dog Nova earlier this month, paid Rs 1.5 lakh for the entire process — including crate upgrades, documentation, and handling charges

The result is a scramble — vaccination timelines misaligned, export documentation incomplete, and uncertainty over whether travel permits will be processed in time.

In response, the Indian govt earlier this month issued a one-time relaxation for pet dogs and cats belonging to stranded Indians returning from war-affected West Asian countries. A March 12 advisory by the department of animal husbandry and dairying allows certain pre-export formalities to be waived, provided owners can furnish basic documentation such as vaccination records or a pet passport.

Where paperwork is incomplete, pets may still be cleared after on-arrival checks, including vaccination and clinical examination by Animal Quarantine and Certification Services (AQCS) officials, with costs borne by the owner.

Airline policies, however, remain a major hurdle. Rules vary widely depending on the pet's size, breed, destination and even weather conditions.

"At the moment, very few airlines are accepting pets," says Anand Vishwanath, managing director of Furry Flyers. His team, he says, has been working up to 20 hours a day. "Pet slots are limited, so we keep searching for alternative dates and routes."

Sterling, a nine-year-old visually impaired labrador retriever, flew with his owner, Ketaki Bhosale, from Dubai to Pune, placed inside a cargo crate

In a social media post, Dubai-based Aastha Munjal described flying her 30kg golden retriever to India earlier this month. The process began just two days before departure. After multiple follow-ups with the airline, she secured approval and paid around AED 3,000 (Rs 75,000).

The paperwork ran into five documents: vaccination records, a veterinary health certificate from the UAE's ministry of climate change and environment, annexure 1.1 for import into India, a no-objection certificate from AQCS, and airline portal submissions.

On the day of travel, she arrived over three hours early at the airport. After document checks and crate weighing, the handover at oversized baggage — Munjal's last point of contact with her pet — took nearly 90 minutes.

To reduce stress, relocation agencies focus on small but critical details — compliant crates, familiar bedding, clothing with the owner's scent, and careful handling. "The goal is not to make travel fun; it is to make it safe, calm and manageable," Siddhartha says.

Mistakes, however, are common. "Missing vaccination timelines or country-specific requirements like titre tests can delay travel significantly," he explains. "And an incorrect crate can lead to last-minute rejection at the airport."

Costs can also escalate quickly. "There are always additional expenses — crate upgrades, documentation, handling charges," says Chashmi Aggarwal, who flew to Delhi with her Maltese, Nova. It cost her over Rs 1.5 lakh. "But at that moment, cost becomes secondary. You just make sure your pet is safe with you."

For Aggarwal, the hardest moment came at the airport. "Handing him over… that moment of separation was tough." The journey, however, was smoother than expected. Back in India, Nova has settled in quickly. "We are exploring the mountains together," she says.

Systemic challenges remain. While policies exist, responsibility is fragmented across airlines, airports, customs, and quarantine authorities, with limited coordination between them. More fundamentally, experts say, pets are still treated as cargo within systems not designed for emergencies. What is needed is simpler: standardised protocols, faster inter-agency coordination, and more airlines willing to accommodate animals in crisis.

Emirates has introduced a dedicated pet travel support service to ensure safer and smoother journeys for furry companions. Through Emirates SkyCargo, a specialised team now manages pet bookings with "priority, care, and sensitivity". From start to finish, pet owners are guided through every step of the way.

Until more airlines open doors, the burden falls on pet parents, and on the small teams working around the clock, to help them.

Yet, Vishwanath says, "It's heartwarming, because despite the challenges, people are choosing not to leave their pets behind — even when it might be the easier option." For Siddhartha, the most meaningful moment is the reunion. "It means the pet arrives not as cargo, but as a loved family member returning home."

Photos: Arvind Sharma

Jaydeep Bishnoi, son of activist Parasram Bishnoi, married the granddaughter of former Haryana home minister in a simple ceremony in Jodhpur

Why Raj is rejecting the 'big-fat' wedding

ShoebKhan@timesofindia.com

After a wedding last Dec, what guests remembered most was not the bride's grand entry, the glittering stage or the lavish spread. It was a refusal. Parasram Bishnoi of Jodhpur, a social and political activist, publicly declined the customary 'tika' of Rs 51 lakh at his son's wedding to the granddaughter of former Haryana home minister Mani Ram Godara.

In Rajasthan, where weddings have long served as displays of status, hierarchy and social conformity, such acts are beginning to signal a larger trend. Across communities, families are trimming ceremonies, capping gifts and cutting guest lists.

"My decision was aimed at discouraging people from accepting cash in lakhs and crores, which puts families under immense pressure," Parasram told **TOI**. The wedding feast, too, was simple — guests were served haldi ki sabzi, dal and halwa, with water in kulhads.

Photos of B R Ambedkar and the Constitution graced the simple ceremony for Mamta Meghwanshi & Krishna Kumar's wedding

For decades, lavish weddings have functioned as social performances. Poorer families often tried to mirror the spending of wealthier ones, even if it meant borrowing heavily, mortgaging jewellery, or selling land. Economist Vijay Vir Singh said a middle-class family can see decades of savings wiped out in a single week of wedding expenses.

Now, in Barmer, Bikaner and Jodhpur, the Bishnoi, Jain and Jangid communities have moved to cap gifts and discourage DJ music, alcohol and extravagant decor. Pali, Jat and Kumawat bodies have issued similar calls for modest ceremonies, fewer guests and limits on gifts as have Rajput groups in the state. Community leaders estimate that where such norms have been enforced, wedding expenses have fallen by 40-60%.

This trend is not confined to one group. On Jan 18, businessman Mohammed Salim Siddique solemnised his daughter's marriage at a mosque, with no decoration or feast. Guests were given small packets of dates, cashews and chocolates. Siddique said marrying daughters "with dignity" is becoming financially difficult. A non-vegetarian meal for 200 guests can cost around Rs 1 lakh, and that's without adding hall rental, lighting, decor and logistics costs. Within weeks, the Qureshi community formally resolved to reject dowry and discourage lavish weddings. Religious scholars backed the move, saying marriage in a mosque is rooted in Sunnah and reflects Islam's emphasis on modesty.

In Banswara, Patel Samaj has banned lavish weddings, pre-wedding shoots and fireworks, imposing fines for violations. Among Scheduled Caste communities, many couples are opting for 'Ambedkarite weddings' — simple ceremonies held before portraits of B R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi — instead of expensive traditional rituals. In March 2023, Dalit thinker Bhanwar Meghwanshi solemnised his daughter's wedding in this manner.

Fashion designer Dipna Kriplani said younger couples are moving away from heavy, costly outfits to simpler designs that can be worn again. Event manager Sameer Babel said many clients now ask for subtle decor, controlled menus and small guest lists. However, Rajiv Gupta, former head of sociology at Rajasthan University, said it may be too early to call this a trend, even though a shift in attitudes is visible.

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA BUILDING & OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WELFARE BOARD.
Kalyana Suraksha Bhavana, ITI Compound, Dairy Circle, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560029, Phone: 080-29753354/56, E-mail: karbuildworkerswelfare@gmail.com
No.KBOCWWB/NOTIFICATIONS/2025-26 Date: 26.03.2026
e-Tender Notification
Tender is hereby invited by Karnataka Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board from interested Agencies as per Terms and conditions described in the Bid document for below mentioned work.
• CONSTRUCTION OF SHRAMIK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL (FROM 6TH STD TO 12TH STD) AT Siraguppa Village, Siraguppa Taluk, Ballari District.
Tender shall be submitted electronically through K.P.P.Portal **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** of the Government of Karnataka. Last date of submission of above tender is as per K.P.P.Portal. For further details and information can be obtained from the Joint Secretary, KBOCWWB during office hours.
Sd/-
Joint Secretary
KB&OCWWB
DIPR/CP/SHIRDI SAI/6478/2025-26

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Chief Engineer (UWP)
5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009
No: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/ACE(WWM-H&AV-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/1159/2025-26 Dated: 25-03-2026
INVITATION FOR TENDER (2nd Call)
(only through KPP Portal)
BWSSB invites Tenders in Two Stage Tender System from eligible tenderers for the work of Refurbishment of existing 1MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at J.P. Park, Matthikere, Bengaluru.
Amount Put to Tender: ₹ 375.90 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 5.64 Lakhs
Last date and time for Receipt of tenders is on **04-04-2026** upto **17:00** hours. The Technical bids will be opened on **06-04-2026** at **11:00** hours. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.
Sd/-
Chief Engineer, (UWP)
DIPR/SI/6469/2025-26

RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)
C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur
RISL invites ebids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./Date/Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost/EMD	Start of sale/Last date
F3.3(565)/RISL/Pur/2026-02871-9030846/BSDC-092 dated 23.03.2026 (RIS2526GLO800095)	RFP for Supply, Installation and Maintenance of Rack Servers for RSDC	Rs. 39 Crores Rs. 78 Lac	15.04.2026 22.04.2026

Details can be seen on the websites http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in. Bids are to be submitted through http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in
Raj.samwad/C/25/23300

Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)
CIN: L74899DL1970GOI005276, GST No.07AACH0632A1ZF
Registered Office: Core-7A, HUDCO Bhawan, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi - 110003, Website: www.hudco.org.in
EMPANELMENT OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AGENCY (PMA)
Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) invites online applications from the firms/companies/LLPs for the empanelment of reputed **Project Management Agencies (PMAs)** across **Real Estate, Road, Energy, Airport, and Seaport** sectors in **Category A:** Project Monitoring & Due Diligence Services (including LIE, LFA, and LIA roles) and/ **Category B:** TEV / DPR Review / Vetting Services. For detailed guidelines, application and relevant documents, visit **HUDCO Website:** www.hudco.org.in, **E-tendering Portal:** https://hudco.ewizard.in , **CPP Portal:** http://eprocure.gov.in .

भारतीय खगोलभौतिकी संस्थान
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ASTROPHYSICS
(विज्ञान एवम् प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग, भारत सरकार)
(Department of Science & Technology, Government of India)
बेंगलुरू Bangalore - 560034
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Sealed tenders are invited from the reputed agencies for hiring of AC / Non-AC vehicles on as and when required basis (Local & Outstation) to the Indian Institute of Astrophysics at Bangalore.
Last date of receipt of Tender is on or before **28.04.2026 at 15.00 hrs.**
The detailed Tender document no – IIA/Veh/Hir/01/2026 can be downloaded from the IIA website http://www.iiap.res.in/tenders/
Administrative Officer

THE MYSORE LAMP WORKS LIMITED
(A Public Sector Enterprise of the Government of Karnataka)
CIN: U17111KA1936PLC000182
Old Tumkur Road, Malleswaram West, Bengaluru-560 055
Tel.: **080-23340182,** e-mail: **mylampsblr@gmail.com**
No. MLWL/Sharevalue-Claims/2025-26 Date: 25.03.2026
PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE TO ERSTWHILE SHAREHOLDERS REGARDING CLAIM OF AMOUNT PURSUANT TO CAPITAL REDUCTION APPROVED BY HON'BLE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, BENGALURU BENCH (NCLT)
Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the Order dated 6th day of August, 2025 passed by the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Bengaluru Bench ("NCLT"), the paid-up share capital of M/s. THE MYSORE LAMP WORKS LIMITED has been reduced from Rs.11,81,02,330/- divided into 1,18,10,233 Equity Shares of a face value of Rs.10/- each to Rs.11,14,85,540/- divided into 1,11,48,554 Equity Shares of a face value of Rs.10/- each, that is reduction of 6,61,679 Equity Shares of a face value of Rs.10/- each held by public shareholders of the Company constituting 5.6% of the paid-up share capital pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(1)(B)(ii) of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 11 of NCLT Rules, 2016. Accordingly, the Company was directed to retain a specified amount in a separate designated bank account for the purpose of settling claims of eligible erstwhile shareholders at a price of Rs.73.10 per share.
Accordingly, erstwhile shareholders whose names appeared in the Register of Members of the Company as on 6th day of August, 2025 and who are entitled to receive amounts arising out of the said capital reduction are hereby requested to submit their claim to the Company along with the necessary supporting documents.
Erstwhile shareholders are required to submit the following documents:
1. Self-attested copy of PAN Card and Aadhaar Card / valid address proof of the shareholder.
2. Original Share Certificate(s) or documentary proof of shareholding from the depository participant along with the client ID and DP ID.
3. Cancelled cheque leaf / bank passbook copy showing the name of the shareholder and bank account details.
4. In case of legal heirs / nominees, relevant documents such as death certificate, succession certificate, probate, or other legal documents as may be applicable.

All claims along with supporting documents must be submitted **within 60 (sixty) days** from the date of this Public Notice at the below mentioned address:
M/s. THE MYSORE LAMP WORKS LIMITED
Registered Office, Old Tumkur Road, Malleshwaram West, Bengaluru - 560 055.
Email: mylampsclaims@gmail.com / Mob: 9844061710
for THE MYSORE LAMP WORKS LIMITED,
Sd/- [Gunjan Krishna] Managing Director

SNAP SHOTS

IOC reintroduces gender test

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Thursday it was reintroducing genetic testing for gender to determine eligibility for "any female category event", beginning with the 2028 Los Angeles Games. "Eligibility for any female category event at the Olympic Games or any other IOC event, including individual and team sports, is now limited to biological females, determined on the basis of a one time SRY gene screening," IOC said in a statement. The SRY screening will be done through a saliva test, cheek swab or blood sample and in the vast majority of cases will be a "once-in-a-lifetime test".

Marin calls it a day: Spanish Olympic badminton gold medal winner Carolina Marin retired from the sport on Thursday after a long struggle with a knee injury. The 32-year-old Marin had hoped to compete in the European Championships in April in Huelva, her home city in Andalucia, but did not want to risk further damaging her knee.

Rishabh shines: Rishabh top-scored with 21 points as Chikkamagaluru scored a 66-15 win against Cincinatics BC in the boys section at the State Junior Basketball Championships in Bengaluru on Thursday. In the girls' section, JSC defeated Orions BC 37-11 with Taarushree returning 26 points. **Results: Boys:** Chikkamagaluru Dist 66 (Rishabh 21, Om Shetty 17) bt Cincinatics BC 15 (Nischith 5) HT 44-7; DYES, Bengaluru 66 (Vaibhav 26, Mohan 15) bt Hoskote BC 23 (Samuel 6) HT 37-10; Hoop-7 BC 70 (Samarth 28, Sai Tarun 12) bt Vanguards BC 31 (Vishwak 17) HT 35-12; HBR BC 76 (Samveg 32, Rishith 12) bt Koramangala SC 36 (Laksh 11, Balaji 10) HT 47-26; Mysore 'A' 58 (Shlok 28, Nigam 12) bt Vimanapura SC 51 (Daniel 17, Pranit 10) HT 34-24; MNK Rao BC 71 (Aakash 20, Yashas 9) bt Orions BC 20 (Yashwanth 10, Aneesh 6) HT 41-3; Beagles BC 47 (Devcharan 11, Jayanth 10) bt IBBC 17 (Priyansh 9, Tarun 5) HT 31-13; Lakshyan BC 49 (Pranav 17, Abinav 12) bt Bharath SU 48 (Pranav 16, Mhaz 15) HT 35-15; Pattabhiramanagar BC 46 (Apurv 15, Kavya 12) bt Hallasaru SU 22 (Ruchir 16, Dhruv 6) HT 20-11. **Girls:** JSC 37 (Taarushree 26) bt Orions BC 11 (Akanksha 5) HT 23-9; Vimanapura SC 25 (Ananya 9, Samskritha 7) bt MNK Rao BC 17 (Hiya 11) HT 14-9; Appaiah BC 28 (Aarushi 8) bt Bangalore Sporting BC 20 (Greesha 4, Ankitha 4) HT 8-14; Bharath SU 33 (Archana 10) bt Southern Blues BC 12 (Sahana 4, Shreya 3) HT 17-7; DYES, Vidyanagar 37 (Vibha 8, Sheetal 7) bt Koramangala SC 15 (Aanya 5) HT 22-12.

Sachin steals the show: CV Raman Nagar claimed their second straight win in the Chief Minister's Cup with an 8-1 victory against BTM Layout in Bengaluru on Thursday. R Sachin stole the show with a hat-trick for the winning team. **Results:** CV Raman Nagar 8 (Rajendran A 5, 86, R Sachin 15, 37, 49, Satish Kumar MR 20, 22, Madhialagan V 34) bt BTM Layout 1 (Nivas 68); Shanthi Nagar 8 (Arvind Babu 10, G John Peter 44+1, Magesh S 59, 84, Pradeep R 72, R Sharath 75, Rayan Wilson 80, Ajay Alex 90) bt Gandhi Nagar 0.

Football trials: The Karnataka State Football Association will conduct trials to pick the state team for the U-20 men's National Championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Monday and Tuesday at 10 am. Players with Indian citizenship born between Jan 1, 2007 and Dec 31, 2009 can attend. Players should report with a copy of the birth certificate and aadhar card.

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REGD. NO. CPMG/KA/GPO-31/2023-05, RNI NO. 45466/85

SCHOTT OFF TO FLYING START

German Leads The Way On Six-Under, Chacarra A Step Behind

Moushumi.Bora@timesofindia.com

Getty Images

TOP SHOW: Freddy Schott hit six birdies in the first 12 holes on the opening day

GOLF

Gurugram: With curly locks flowing out of their golf caps, Freddy Schott and Eugenio Chacarra were the main men to watch on the opening day of the $2.55 million Hero Indian Open.

Schott made a flying start with six birdies in the first 12 holes at the intimidating DLF G&CC's Gary Player-designed course. "Pretty much flawless," he noted. Chacarra, a group ahead of him, made six in the final 12. "It's just the good vibes I feel on this course," said the defending champion.

Schott absorbed bogeys on the 14th and 17th. "At least those were the most difficult holes, so that's alright," he said. Chacarra dropped two on the second and 15th. He took the medicine and moved on. "It's a course that obviously can go both ways so I'm just happy that I fought until the end."

When the Spaniard's second shot on the 18th hit a cameraman's tripod to roll back to the fringe of the greens, he pitched it to two feet for a birdie to walk off as the joint leader at five-under 67. It felt like two narratives were merging into one. But the German changed the headline with one last push. A closing birdie, fashioned after an errant drive, sent the Bahrain Championship winner into the sole lead at six-under.

"My caddy and I were planning to be pretty much conservative off the tee and then be aggressive on the greens. Wedging, putting was good, so that led me to that score," was the 25-year-old's analysis. "It's a real golf course. You hit every club in the bag, you can't really have a weakness," Chacarra, who turned 26 last Sunday, pointed out the degree of difficulty that had scarred many golfers here.

His playing partners in the marquee group, South African Casey Jarvis, who is already a two-time winner on the Tour this year, and 2018 Open champion Francesco Molinari had their share of troubles. On the ninth before the turn, Jarvis was visibly unhappy with his third bogey. His arms gesturing to the caddy, Europe's No. 3 released his frustration by tossing the ball into the lake. Francesco was less animated with his double bogey, with just a gentle shake of the head while Chacarra himself was miffed at a birdie miss.

BHATIA HITS THE WRONG BALL!

The tournament's top draw, World No. 22 Akshay endured a difficult introduction to the course. He was eight-over on the infamous quarry-nine, even playing the wrong ball on the 15th for a two-shot penalty. But the Arnold Palmer Invitational champion restored some sanity with a three-under recovery after the turn. At five-over 77, he was well off the pace on T-98th but still managed a smile afterwards. "Glad I didn't shoot 80!" he laughed, "This golf course is hard so if I can just try and get it back to even par, I think it'll be a nice comeback for me."

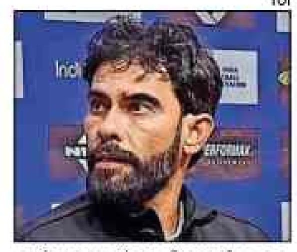
In the same group with Schott, Shubhankar Sharma was hoping for a happy homecoming but he was also one among the 15 at five-over. Veer Ahlawat was the best-placed Indian at evenpar. As for the leader from Dusseldorf, he will probably be calling up his mentor and close friend, Marcel Siem, the winner here in 2023. Living in the same house in South Africa with the 45-year-old during Covid, Freddy now has a shot at the same title.

Round 1 leaderboard: 66-Freddy Schott (Ger), **67**-Eugenio Chacarra, **68**-Dan Bradbury (Eng); **Top Indians: 72**-Veer Ahlawat (T32), **73**-Om Prakash Chouhan, Kartik Singh, Kshitij Naveed Kaul, Mohd Azhar (after 17 holes) (T41).

Jamil denied entry to Kochi stadium

Rayson.Tennyson
@timesofindia.com

TOI



Kochi: The Indian men's football team faced fresh embarrassment on Thursday, this time even before they could take the field.

National head coach Khalid Jamil and the team were denied entry to Kochi's Jawaharlal Nehru International Stadium, the venue for India's Asian Cup qualifier against Hong Kong on March 31. Jamil had reached the stadium to inspect the pitch and attend a scheduled press conference, but officials of the Greater Cochin Development Authority (GCDA) refused him entry.

PAYMENT DISPUTE

GCDA security staff also stopped the Indian team from training at the stadium. The team had to later train at Kerala Blasters' training ground in Trippunithura, 10 kilometres away from the stadium.

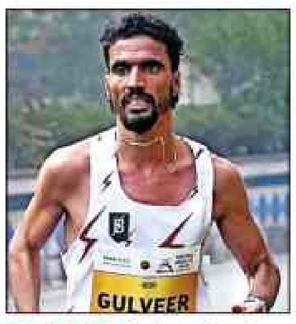
Kerala players Ashique Kuruniyan, Sahal Abdul Samad and Bijoy Varghese were also expected to join their head coach for the media interaction at JNI, but returned to their hotel after learning of the situation while on their way to the stadium. GCDA staff said they were acting on instructions from the secretary and chairman not to allow anyone into the stadium complex until the full rent and security deposit was paid by the Kerala Football Association (KFA), the host association for India's Asian Cup Qualifier with Hong Kong here on Mar 31.

KFA president Navas Meeran said the issue was only technical and would be resolved soon. "The Asian Cup qualifier will go ahead as planned. What happened on Thursday was a minor technical problem, and it will be sorted out soon," he said.

The GCDA is seeking a security deposit of Rs 25 lakh and a match rent of Rs 3 lakh. The KFA agreed to make the payment, but the GCDA demanded the full amount and completion of all procedures on Thursday itself, before allowing the scheduled press conference and practice session to proceed. Although the KFA asked for more time, the GCDA refused.

Gulveer to lead India's challenge

Times News Network



ELITE FIELD: Gulveer Singh

WORLD 10K

Bengaluru: Gulveer Singh will lead the Indian elite field at the 18th edition of the TCS World 10K Bengaluru, scheduled here on April 26.

He heads into the race in red-hot form, having finished third at the New York City Half Marathon earlier this month, where he clocked 59:42s, the best by an Indian. The national record holder in the 10,000m (27:00.22) and 5000m (12:59.77), Gulveer enjoyed a standout 2025 season, winning both events at the Asian Athletics Championships. He also set a meet record of 1:12:06 at the Tata Steel World 25K Kolkata 2025.

"The TCS World 10K Bengaluru is one of the most competitive road races in the country, and I'm excited to lineup this year. It will be a great opportunity to test myself again on the roads in Bengaluru," Gulveer said.

Speaking about the quality of the field, Gulveer said, "The World 10K Bengaluru attracts some of the best international athletes every year. Competing against such a strong field motivates Indian runners to push themselves harder, and it can also inspire many young athletes in the country to take up running."

"Events like this are very important for the ecosystem, especially in a year where we are focusing on the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games," he added.

Indian elite athletes will also compete for top honours with Rs 3 lakh on offer for the top finishers, with an additional Rs 1 lakh for setting an event record. Earlier in the month, organisers announced a strong international elite lineup, including Harbert Kibet of Uganda, Kenya's Vincent Langat, Ethiopia's Gemechu Dida and Eritrea's Samuel Habte.

Munoz named BFC head coach

FOOTBALL

Bengaluru: Bengaluru FC on Thursday announced the appointment of Spaniard Pep Munoz as the new head coach until the end of the 2026-27 season. Munoz will take charge of the first team as the club looks to continue competing at the highest level.

Munoz has previously worked within FC Barcelona's youth set-up with Barca U19 and Barcelona 'B', and has also spent time in China with Qingdao Huanghai, Shandong Luneng and with the Chinese national team. His first full role as head coach came in Cambodia with Preah Khan Reach Svay Rieng, when he helped the club win the league twice, while also reaching the final of the AFC Challenge League. PTI

Sabalenka sets up Rybakina clash in SF

TENNIS

World number one Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina on Wednesday booked a blockbuster semifinal at the Miami Open in a rerun of their Melbourne Grand Slam decider. Defending champion Sabalenka held off big-hitting 45th-ranked American Hailey Baptiste 6-4, 6-4.

World number two Rybakina beat fifth-seeded American Jessica Pegula -- runner-up to Sabalenka last year -- 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. They will return on Thursday at the Hard Rock Stadium to fight for a place in the final.

Rybakina beat Sabalenka in a nail-biting Australian Open final in January -- the world number one's only defeat in 2026 -- but the Belarusian avenged it with victory in the Indian Wells final this month.

FILS TOPS PAUL

In the men's draw, Arthur Fils of France saved four match points on the way to a 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6) victory over American Tommy Paul. He will face 21st-seeded Czech Jiri Lehecka. Lehecka ended the dream run of qualifier Martin Landaluce, beating the 151st-ranked Spaniard 7-6 (7/1), 7-5.

Results (Quarters): Men: 21-Jiri Lehecka (Cze) bt Martin Landaluce (Esp) 7-6 (7/1), 7-5; 28-Arthur Fils (Fra) bt 22-Tommy Paul (USA) 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6). **Women:** 1-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt Hailey Baptiste (USA) 6-4, 6-4; 3-Elena Rybakina (Kaz) bt 5-Jessica Pegula (USA) 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. AFP

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
Gates Entry Have Been Changed look at Map For Details

STAND INDEX

A STAND ENTRY GATE: E1 INSIDE GATE: G6	B STAND ENTRY GATE: E23 INSIDE GATE: G7	C STAND ENTRY GATE: E19 INSIDE GATE: G9
D CORPORATE ENTRY GATE: E2 OR E3 INSIDE GATE: G5	D LOFT ENTRY GATE: E2 OR E3 INSIDE GATE: G5	DIAMOND BOX ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G1
E EXECUTIVE LOUNGE ENTRY GATE: E2 OR E3 INSIDE GATE: G5	E STAND ENTRY GATE: E17 INSIDE GATE: G11	F - BLOCK 1 ENTRY GATE: E16 INSIDE GATE: G13
F - BLOCK 2 ENTRY GATE: E16 INSIDE GATE: G13	GRAND TERRACE ENTRY GATE: E18 INSIDE GATE: G10	H UPPER ENTRY GATE: E17 INSIDE GATE: G12
M1 ENTRY GATE: E11 OR E12 INSIDE GATE: G15	M2 ENTRY GATE: E11 OR E12 INSIDE GATE: G15	M2 ANNEXE ENTRY GATE: E13 INSIDE GATE: G14
M3 ENTRY GATE: E13 INSIDE GATE: G14	M4 ENTRY GATE: E13 INSIDE GATE: G14	MEDIA ENTRY GATE: E11 INSIDE GATE: G15
P1 ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G3A	P1 ANNEXE ENTRY GATE: E5 INSIDE GATE: G3	P2 ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G2
P3 - BLOCK 1 ENTRY GATE: E2 OR E3 INSIDE GATE: G4	P3 - BLOCK 2 ENTRY GATE: E2 OR E3 INSIDE GATE: G4	P CORPORATE ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G2
P LOFT ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G3A	P TERRACE ENTRY GATE: E8 INSIDE GATE: G2	PLATINUM LOUNGE ENTRY GATE: E22 INSIDE GATE: G8

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THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026

KYLIAN MBAPPE DENIES REAL MADRID EXAMINED WRONG KNEE AFTER INJURY

F1 RACER NORRIS TALKS UP MCLAREN CHANCES AFTER DOUBLE CHINA DISASTER

HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDERS

Shreyas Iyer's Punjab Kings, Who Lost In The Final Last Season, Have Unfinished Business In IPL-2026...

TOI

UNDERDOGS NO MORE: Shreyas Iyer of PBKS

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

There's a particular kind of quiet that surrounds teams that are on the threshold of something big. Not the silence of absence but of anticipation. Punjab Kings walk into the new IPL season carrying exactly that.

Last year, Punjab lost a gutwrenching final, by just six runs, to Royal Challengers Bengaluru after topping the league stage. Skipper Shreyas Iyer led the batting with 604 runs while Arshdeep Singh spearheaded the bowling with 21 wickets. It was arguably the most complete Punjab Kings season in the franchise's history. And yet, at the end of it all, the trophy still wasn't theirs.

IPL 2026 — 1 DAY TO GO

Runner-up, the record books will say. But those who watched closely will remember something else. A side that had started to maximise itself. And now, as the new season looms, they return not as hopefuls but as a team with pedigree.

At the centre of it stands Shreyas Iyer. In the IPL, he is trusted, even assured. Outside of it, especially in India's T20 conversations, he remains a peripheral figure. It is a strange duality: a leader of men in one arena, a question mark in another. That dissonance often sharpens cricketers. With Iyer, it has added layers.

Last season, his captaincy wasn't loud. It rarely is. But it was deliberate. A field tweak here, a bowling change there, an ability to hold nerve when games tilted. What Punjab found in him was not just a batter who could anchor but a mind that could absorb chaos.

Iyer, who is one of IPL's most decorated active franchise captain, arrives this season with something to prove. Not to the Indian cricket board (BCCI) necessarily, but to himself, and perhaps to the franchise whose maiden title he has promised to deliver.

It's a settled squad, built over two careful years. Punjab's identity is no longer just about flair; it is about balance. And much of that rests on their Indian core, a group of players who, in many ways, mirror Iyer's own narrative: talented, sometimes overlooked, often decisive.

Take their top order. It is expected to carry both intent and responsibility. Prabhsimran Singh was the team's second-highest run-scorer in IPL-2025, finishing with 549 runs in 17 innings at a strike rate of 160.53. The Powerplay partnership he formed with Priyansh Arya was the foundation of PBKS's dream run to the final.

Prabhsimran is one of those batters who was made for T20 cricket — a big-shouldered, right-handed hitter who doesn't waste the first six overs. He is no longer a prospect. Last season confirmed him as a performer.

And then there is Priyansh Arya, a left-hander who exploded onto the IPL stage in 2025. Arya smashed 475 runs in 17 innings at a blistering 179.24 strike-rate, setting the record for most runs by an uncapped debutant. His debut season was sensational. But IPL is a tournament where bowlers adapt fast. Whether Arya can counter the challenges thrown at him by better-prepared bowlers will be one of the most interesting subplots of this year's tournament.

In the middle order, there is intrigue. Nehal Wadhera and Shashank Singh form perhaps the most underrated middle-order pair in IPL. Wadhera scored 369 runs in 16 matches at a strike-rate of 145.84 in IPL-2025. Shashank, meanwhile, scored 350 runs across the season, including an unbeaten 61 off 30 balls in the final against RCB. That knock by Shashank in the final — in a losing cause, knowing the title was slipping away, still swinging — told you everything about the character of this Punjab team.

Where Punjab have quietly stolen a march on some rivals is in the allrounders' department. The trio of Marcus Stoinis, Marco Jansen and Azmatullah Omarzai gives them seam-bowling muscle and long batting, while Harpreet Brar and Suryansh Shedge add Indian options who can contribute with both bat and ball.

Among the bowlers, Yuzvendra Chahal will be Punjab's strike spinner. Retained for a massive Rs 18 crore, the 35-year-old Chahal is the joint highest-paid player in the squad alongside Arshdeep Singh.

As Punjab Kings gear up to open their 2026 campaign against the Gujarat Titans on March 31, the narrative around them has fundamentally shifted. They are no longer the perennial underdogs of the IPL. They are the defending runners-up, a heavyweight contender with a score to settle.

THE PBKS SWOT

Runners-up last season, Punjab Kings have built a high-ceiling, high variance squad stacked with allrounders. They, however, have a noticeable gap in the middle order that could potentially upend their balance and expose vulnerabilities in high-scoring games. Here's how they stack up...

Strength: The batting. With Marcus Stonis, Azmatullah Omarzai and Marco Jansen, PBSK can stretch their batting till No. 8 without sacrificing bowling options.

Weakness: The lack of an established high-scoring domestic opener. This will put the onus on captain Iyer to do the bulk of the scoring at the top of the order. Another weakness is the presence of ageing stars like Marcus Stoinis and Chahal, whose sustainability across a long tournament is doubtful.

Opportunity: Chance for young Priyansh Arya to redefine Punjab's starts in the Powerplay. Musheer Khan and Suryansh Shegde could become X-factors.

Threat: Over-dependence on Iyer and **Arshdeep**. Also, the management yet to nail down first-choice playing XI.

—Text: **Vishal Menon**

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No opening ceremony as mark of respect to stampede victims

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

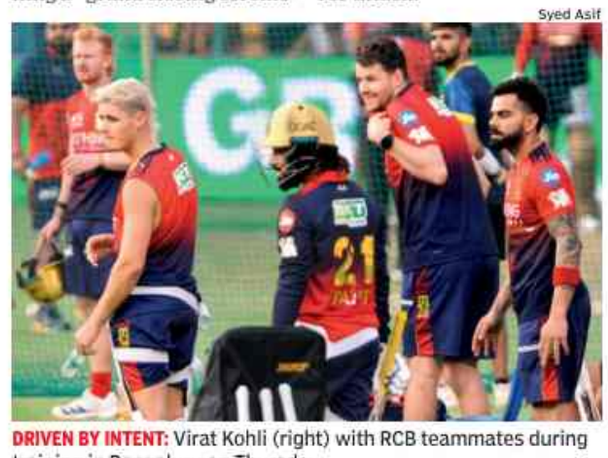
Mumbai: The BCCI has decided to skip the traditional opening ceremony for IPL-2026 as a mark of respect and remembrance for the 11 victims of the stampede in Bengaluru during RCB's maiden title victory celebrations last June.

But while there will be no celebrations before the first match between RCB and Sunrisers Hyderabad on Saturday night at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, the BCCI and IPL governing council are planning a "grand closing ceremony" on the day of the final on May 31, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told **TOI**.

"Due to last year's tragic incident, there will be no formal function on the day of the start. The BCCI is not organizing any cultural or entertainment show at the start of IPL-19 as a mark of respect to the departed souls. However, there will be a grand entertainment function at the closing of the IPL," Saikia said.

The opening ceremony was also scrapped back in 2019 in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack.

Syed Asif



DRIVEN BY INTENT: Virat Kohli (right) with RCB teammates during training in Bengaluru on Thursday

IMPACT-PLAYER RULE MAKES GAME ONE DIMENSIONAL: GILL

Ahmedabad: Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill on Wednesday said the Impact-Player rule "takes the skill out of the game". "Personally for me, I don't think there should be an Impact Player. Cricket in general is an 11 players' game and on wickets where we play on the grounds that we play, adding an extra batsman takes the skill out of the game," said Gill, who leads India in Tests and ODIs.

"With that one extra one player in the IPL, it's making the game more one-dimensional and it's taking a little bit of the skill out of the game." PTI

Low-profile venues for Border-Gavaskar Tests

New Delhi: India will host Australia in a marquee five-match series early next year but several of the country's traditional Test venues have not been selected to stage one of cricket's fiercest rivalries in this format of the game.

Nagpur will host the first match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy from Jan 21, followed by Tests in Chennai, Guwahati, Ranchi and Ahmedabad, the Indian cricket board said on Thursday.

Kolkata, Mumbai and Bengaluru were not allotted matches despite being established Test centres that have historically drawn strong crowds. Guwahati will be hosting its second Test at the Assam Cricket Association (ACA) Stadium in Barsapara. The city staged its first Test in Nov 2025, when India played South Africa.

Ahmedabad, home to the world's largest cricket venue by capacity, has increasingly become India's go-to venue for marquee matches, including the finals of the ODI (2023) and T20 (2026) World Cups.

Australia hold the Border-Gavaskar Trophy following their 3-1 victory at home early last year.

India's home season will begin with eight limited-overs matches against West Indies in Sep-Oct, followed by three ODIs and as many T20 Internationals against Sri Lanka. Zimbabwe will play three ODIs in India in Jan. REUTERS

AUSTRALIA IN INDIA

TEST SCHEDULE

Jan 21 to Jan 25, 2027	Nagpur
Jan 29 to Feb 02, 2027	Chennai
Feb 11 to Feb 15, 2027	Guwahati
Feb 19 to Feb 23, 2027	Ranchi
Feb 27 to Mar 03, 2027	Ahmedabad

No time for caution

Maximising The Powerplay Has Become Central To Teams' Ultra-Aggressive Approach In T20s

Vishal.Menon@timesofindia.com

Not long ago, the first six overs in a T20, the Powerplay, merely set the tone of the game. Now, they deliver the verdict. What was once the phase when batters 'got their eye in' has mutated into something far more decisive: a window where games are won, lost or irreversibly bent out of shape.

In 2024, Sunrisers Hyderabad notched up 125/0 in six overs against Delhi Capitals, the highest Powerplay score in IPL. If that felt like an outlier, the T20 World Cup final held earlier this month — India blasted 92/0 in this phase, the highest Powerplay total in an ICC tournament — erased all lingering doubts.

"In the early days, teams were trying to figure out the best way to approach T20 cricket. With time, strategies became clearer and mindsets shifted dramatically. Today, the format is defined by aggression and fearlessness," former India opener WV Raman told **TOI**.

It's easy to credit bigger bats, flatter pitches and shorter boundaries but that's a simplistic explanation. What's really changed is the intent of batters. Teams no longer take advantage of the Powerplay. They treat it as a window that must be cashed in with ruthless clarity. Batters walk in knowing the match-ups, the angles, the release points of bowlers. They've already decided which balls will be attacked before they're even bowled.

"With the new ball and fielding restrictions in place, the Powerplay is the ideal phase to seize control of the game. This approach is evident even in places like Australia, where larger grounds haven't deterred batters from going ballistic early on. The rise of T20 specialists has only reinforced this trend," Raman said.

Bowlers, meanwhile, operate under a suffocating constraint: two fielders outside the 30-yard circle, a hard ball, and batters who no longer respect reputation. Swing, once an ally, has become fleeting, gone with the blink of an eye. Miss your length by millimetres and the ball disappears into the stands.

"Bowlers must adapt and think smarter. Modern cricket requires awareness, variation and tactical intelligence. However, even the smartest bowler needs conditions that allow those skills to be effective," Raman said.

What this has done is compress the game's tension. A T20 game used to unfold in layers: a steady start, a middle-overs squeeze and explosion at the death. Now, the first act threatens to swallow the rest. When a team races to 80 or 90 in six overs, the middle overs become about maintenance.

With such sustained and frenetic batting upfront, can a score of 300 become a reality in this IPL? Raman believes that given how scoring trends are evolving, such a milestone seems within reach if conditions align. "I remember a game featuring SRH in 2024 when they came close (287), but I think it is possible," he said.

Captains and coaches are recalibrating their strategies accordingly. There's a growing propensity to front-load the best bowlers and gamble early in the hope of breaking momentum. But even that carries risk: burn your aces too soon and the back end is exposed. Hold them back, and you may not have a game left to control. It's a strategic vice.

Then there's the psychological shift. A blistering Powerplay doesn't just add runs; it distorts perception. What should have been scoreboard pressure turns into mere arithmetic.

So, have the first six overs become the single biggest swing phase in T20Is? It's hard to argue otherwise. No other segment of the game offers the combination of structural advantage, intent and irreversible consequence. The death overs can still dazzle, and the middle overs can still choke. But Powerplay has turned into a crucible.

In a format that prides itself on brevity, it's fitting that everything comes down to the first 36 balls.

THE MOST PROLIFIC IPL-2025 VENUES

Best runs per over recorded last season*

Venue	Matches	RPO	Highest	Lowest
Uppal, Hyderabad	6	10.28	286/6	133/7
Motera, Ahmedabad	9	10.16	243/5	147
Sawai Mansingh, Jaipur	7	9.99	219/5	117
Kotla, Delhi	7	9.98	278/3	162/8
Ekana, Lucknow	8	9.83	231/6	159/6
Eden Gardens, Kolkata	7	9.78	238/3	120

* (Minimum 5 matches) —**Stats:** Rajesh Kumar

HIGHEST POWERPLAY SCORES IN IPL

Score	Team	Vs	Venue	Date
125/0	SRH	DC	Delhi	20-4-2024
107/0	SRH	LSG	Hyderabad	8-5-2024
105/0	KKR	RCB	Bengaluru	7-5-2017
100/2	CSK	KXIP	Mumbai (WS)	30-5-2014

50 MATCHES IN 2ND PHASE OF IPL FROM APR 13 TO MAY 24: BCCI

New Delhi: The second phase of the IPL 2026 will begin on April 13 and conclude on May 24, the BCCI announced on Thursday while releasing the full fixtures of the league phase. The first phase runs from Mar 28 to Apr 12, with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad facing off in the league opener at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday. The final is slated for May 31 in Bengaluru.

"The remainder of the league stage, comprising 50 matches, will be played across 12 venues in India," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement. "Matches in the second phase will be held in Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Dharamshala, Raipur and New Chandigarh," he added.

"As the tournament enters a crucial phase, teams will compete across venues for a place in the playoffs, with the race expected to intensify through the latter half of the league stage."

The venues for the playoffs and final will be announced at a later date. PTI

MANIKANTA POWERS KARNATAKA

Raipur: Swimmer Manikanta L stole the show on the second day of the Khelo India Tribal Games here on Thursday. Manikanta single-handedly kept Karnataka at the top of the medals table as he grabbed three more gold medals on Thursday to take his individual gold tally to five.

Manikanta has won every race he has competed so far. The Karnataka swimmer, who had won the 100m breaststroke and 50m butterfly gold on Wednesday, began the day by winning the 200m Individual Medley with a time of 2:25.93s. He returned a few minutes later to stop the clock at 1:07.94s in the 100m backstroke final and then swam the anchor leg in the 4x100m relay team to make it five gold medals. At the end of Day 2, Karnataka were leading with eight gold, three silver and one bronze while Odisha were a close second with five gold, one silver and eight bronze medals. TNN

Caruana steady yet unconvincing

Amit.Karmarkar@timesgroup.com

Fabiano Caruana, 33, is not exactky known for his killer instinct. And although by nature the Candidates tournament presents very few must-win scenarios, 'Fabi' is simply not fabulous when it comes to handling nerves.

It's somewhat of a hazard then to dub the American world No. 3 the favourite for the eight-player men's tournament in Cyprus that starts on Sunday. However, no one can deny his strength. In addition, the absence of his chief rivals here — Ding Liren and Ian Nepomniachtchi — could end up as a benefit to him.

CANDIDATES CHESS

Being the first to qualify for the Candidates through the FIDE Circuit of 2024, Caruana had endured the least amount of uncertainty compared to his seven rivals in Cyprus. But is it clearly beneficial? Or is it likely that he undercooked for sterner tests?

In a must-win situation against Nepo (to force a tiebreak against eventual winner Gukesh) in the last round of the previous Candidates, Caruana held a plus-3 advantage for a good part of the game playing with white pieces. The computer evaluation also jumped to decisive +7 in his favour at one stage. But after 110-plus moves, he could only split a point, easing Gukesh's passage to the title clash.

Getty Images

Fabiano Caruana

Of course, Caruana defeated Alexander Grischuk in the last round of the Candidates in 2018 with black pieces when he won the right to challenge Magnus Carlsen. He is the only player who did not allow Carlsen a single win in the classical phase of their world championship match the same year. He is one of the only four players to reach Elo 2825-plus in the history of the sport. But that was 12 years ago. And a lot has flown under the bridge since.

Caruana remains a solid player with great positional understanding, preparation and ability to calculate. But his decision-making skills have clearly suffered in recent years with frequent emergence of mental demons. However, this grim-looking lacuna could suddenly evaporate if he manages to take an early lead in Cyprus.

Since his Candidates debut at 23 years in 2016, he has qualified for all the Candidates tournaments underlining his consistency in no uncertain terms at this level.

Caruana at Candidates

2016: Finished second, one point behind Sergey Karjakin
2018: Won by a point over Karjakin and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.
2021: Finished 4th.
2023: Finished 5th.
2024: Tied 2nd.

The magic of +4

The average winning score in the last-four Candidates event is 9 points (which is four more wins than defeats in the 14-round meet). Caruana's combined head-to-head score against his seven Candidates rivals is exactly +4. That is 27 wins, 23 defeats and 87 draws (over 137 games against these seven rivals). In other words, Caruana needs to show +4 level over only 14 games and not over 130-plus games against these specific players.

THE BATS ARE OUT!

Syed Asif

AWESOME TRIO: Sunrisers Hyderabad's Heinrich Klaasen (from left) and the Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Rajat Patidar and Virat Kohli during a training session at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Thursday

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THE TIMES

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US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP AND CHINESE LEADER XI JINPING WILL HOLD THEIR HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SUMMIT MAY 14-15 IN BEIJING 15

15 women in top posts challenge K'taka's period leave order in HC

Bengaluru: A group of 15 women, working in managerial positions (in HR, legal and other departments) in various private establishments in Bengaluru, Monday moved the Karnataka high court against the state govt's menstrual leave order, **reports Vasantha Kumar**.

They argued that the compulsory leave could lead to bias against hiring women, as employers could perceive women as less capable than men. They also contended that the distinction made between men and women in granting this special leave lacks logic and a rational basis and does not advance workplace equality.

▶'An act of sexism', P 3

Girl's body found in flour container

A seven-year-old girl who went missing on Tuesday was found dead inside a flour container in a tenant's room in Agra's Tajganj. Sunil Kumar, 35, who worked in a shoe unit owned by the girl's father Dinesh Kumar, is on the run. Sunil and Dinesh had a fight as the former had failed to pay the rent for the past five months, police said. P 5

76L so far: 10% of voter roll in Bengal deleted

Final Count May Be 6.8 Cr, Down From 7.6 Cr

Kaushik Pradhan & Poulami Roy

Kolkata: A rejection rate of 35-40% in Bengal's post-SIR purge through judicial adjudication has taken the number of voters lost to discrepancies since the scrutiny began to 75.7 lakh – constituting 10% of the original 7.6 crore-strong electorate. By the time two more supplementary lists are out, the final voter count is projected to be around 6.8 crore, Election Commission officials said Thursday.

The draft rolls published last Dec after SIR excluded 58 lakh ASD (absent, shifted, dead or duplicate) voters. The final list struck off another 5.5 lakh and flagged 60 lakh for judicial adjudication.

EC published the first supplementary list of under-adjudication voters Monday night. The second is scheduled for Friday and the third for April 3. Till Thursday, about 36 lakh cases were disposed of.

"Of the 32 lakh cases that were vetted until Tuesday, up to 40% were rejected," a senior EC official said.

▶Under adjudication, P 10

DOCS EXEMPTED FROM POLL DUTY

Kids dressed as Ram, Lakshman and Hanuman lead a TMC poll campaign rally on the occasion of Ram Navami in Kolkata on Thursday

- EC **reverses its order**, exempts doctors at Prafulla Chandra Sen Govt Medical College in Bengal's Arambagh from poll duty
- Mamata's chartered plane **hovers over Kolkata for an hour** as hailstorm hits the region
- **Sub-inspector among 8 cops injured** as violence breaks out during **BJP campaign rally** at Basanti in South 24 Parganas. BJP's candidate alleges that **mob backed by governing party** attacked his supporters

Not yet cleared to vote, but assigned poll duty

Kolkata: In a striking incongruity ahead of Bengal polls, a number of individuals across districts have been assigned responsibilities in conducting elections, even as the EC continues to keep their names 'under adjudication' — effectively questioning or withholding their voter status, **reports Krishnendu Bandyopadhyay**.

TOI spoke with several poll officials whose eligibility as voters remains unresolved. Many of them have begun training to serve as presiding or polling officers.

Sadequl Islam, a teacher at Gulabari Pallimangal High School in Barasat, is one such 'doubtful' voter who's undergoing training as presiding officer in Barasat constituency. "It's a theatre of the absurd. The EC reminds me of my responsibility as a presiding officer and yet, remains oblivious to my right as a voter for the same election," he said.

▶'Own voter status', P 10

K'taka MLAs demand 4 VIP passes each for IPL matches

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Legislators across parties played on the front foot on Thursday, demanding four complimentary tickets each for matches played at Karnataka State Cricket Association's Chinnaswamy Stadium, including the upcoming edition of IPL.

Ahead of Saturday's IPL opener between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad, the lawmakers flagged "disrespect" at the stadium and sought better access and seating during matches. Assembly speaker UT Khader and council chairman Basavaraj Horatti directed the govt to ensure at least four VIP tickets are given to each MLA.

Deputy CM D K Shivakumar assured the House he would step in as he knew the KSCA president (Venkatesh Prasad) "personally". "I'm a voting member of KSCA. There is nothing wrong with what MLAs are asking."

With the collective lawmaker strength (224 in assembly and 75 in council) nearing 300, the ask is about 1,200 tickets, a challenge considering the limited number of premium seats. Other stakeholders, too, need to be given passes, a KSCA source said.

▶'Waiting at gates...', P 4

EACH MLA GETS ONE TICKET NOW

MLAs 224 | MLCs 75

Request for passes/ tickets: 4 each

What they get now

- **MLA:** 1 complimentary ticket for P3 stand
- **Ministers:** 2 complimentary tickets for P3 stand + an invite for the minister and spouse to watch the match from the committee room

- D K Shivakumar says **'there is nothing wrong with what MLAs are asking'** and says that he would step in as he knew KSCA president

"If KSCA gives away 1,200 passes to legislators, it will have very few left for others, which include other govt arms, BCCI, players, coaches, umpires and clubs — **A KSCA source**

Nirav case: UK judges say torture claims worrying

London: The judges who ruled against fugitive jeweller Nirav Modi's attempt to reopen his appeal against extradition said their judgment "presents a worrying picture of the use of proscribed treatment to obtain confessions, which was characterised as 'commonplace and endemic'," **reports Naomi Canton**.

Lord Justice Stuart-Smith and Justice Jay said in their order: "Were it not for the statements made and assurances given by the govt of India, we would be minded to reopen this appeal." Nirav could be extradited to India within a month after losing his final roll of the dice.

▶Limited options, P 6

B'luru leads, not competes with Hyd: DKS

Karnataka deputy CM DK Shivakumar Thursday said Bengaluru is setting a benchmark and is not in competition with Hyderabad or any other city. Referring to **TOI** report on the 'WeAreCity 2026' study by UnboxingBLR and How India Lives, Opposition leader R Ashoka and BJP leader CN Ashwath Narayan criticized the govt for staying silent on issues like traffic and pollution, even as comparisons between Bengaluru and Hyderabad continue to grow. "Bengaluru will continue to lead, and others will follow. I am not keen on competing with Hyderabad," the deputy CM said. P 4

DKS: Flyovers, double-decker corridors to ease B'luru traffic

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: State govt Thursday announced new infrastructure projects, mainly focused on Bengaluru's key entry and exit chokepoints. Deputy CM and Bengaluru development minister D K Shivakumar said the govt would push ahead with tunnel roads, flyovers and double-decker corridors to decongest high-traffic stretches.

Replying to a debate in the legislative assembly on infrastructure gaps, Shivakumar said the long-pending Ejipura flyover would be completed in 4-5 months, adding that Rs 25 crore dues to contractors had been cleared.

On concerns over congestion at Nelamangala, the deputy CM said, "We'll build a new road from Nelamangala-Sondekoppa, Tavarekere-Bidadi to reduce congestion. A notification was issued in 2006, but there was no action on it. We'll execute the project through BMRDA."

The minister said the govt has conceptualised a Rs 3,000-crore plan to develop 300 km of roads along stormwater drains, with initial allocation of Rs 300 crore.

▶Only 8% major roads, P 4

NO OCCUPANCY CERT FOR 40X60FT PLOTS

- **E-khatas issued:** Of 25 lakh properties, 9 lakh received e-khata. 1.2 lakh applications received for conversion from B to A khata; 60,000 disposed of, 45,000 rejected, and rest under progress
- **Occupancy certificates waived:** OC exemption initially given to 30x40ft plots now extended to houses built on 40x60ft plots
- **Garbage package:** Despite legal hurdles, 33 contracts have been rolled out
- **Mekedatu project:** With SC's greenlight, work on Mekedatu reservoir project across Cauvery will start in 2 yrs
- **Jakkur school to stay:** CM sets aside proposal to shift, says flying school will continue to function from Jakkur premises

Home in turmoil, Iranian seeks calm in desi dangal

Lucknow: Erfan Hosseinzadeh Shali finds himself cheered even when he wins over Indian wrestlers. Back home in war-wracked Iran, though, his sport faces challenges akin to a pugilist's pin-down, **report Arvind Chauhan & Fazal Khan**.

The 25-year-old Iranian, weighing 125kg, was in action Wednesday in Lucknow. As the floor at KD Singh Babu stadium trembled under the weight of Erfan and his rival, the crowd leant in with rising anticipation. At first, the chants favoured the local contender. But as Erfan executed a decisive move, applause broke out across the arena.

In desi circuits, where local loyalty runs deep, Erfan's win over paramilitary force rival Harsh Rana was no mean achievement, earning him Rs 2.5 lakh and adding to his growing recognition here.

Ajay Kumar

'They are safe,' says Erfan about his family back home

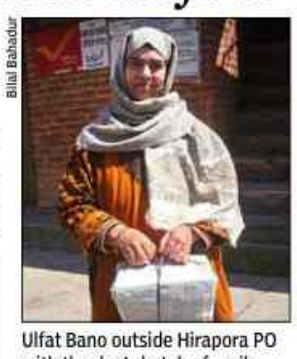
▶Finds opportunity, P 8

J&K's first postwoman clocks 30 years on foot

Srinagar: Ulfat Bano collects around 25 letters from the district post office in south Kashmir's Shopian every morning and sets out on foot. There is neither a postal van to hop onto nor a bicycle for her if weariness strikes. The 55-year-old trudges through her native village of Hirapora, past stone walls and wooden barns with corrugated tin roofs — and when winter arrives, through knee-deep snow — to put each envelope in the right hands, **reports Bilal Bahadur**.

Ulfat's routine hasn't changed in over three decades, yet she treats the job with the enthusiasm of a recent recruit. For Hirapora, Kashmir's first postwoman remains the lone postal link with the outside world. The terrain Ulfat negotiates in the line of duty does not make allowances.

Bilal Bahadur



Ulfat Bano outside Hirapora PO with the day's batch of mails

▶Lifelines on track, P 11

Too many meds in old age? Cutting back could be safe

In Frail Seniors, Over-Treatment Can Do More Harm Than Good: Study

Anuja.Jaiswal
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: For many elderly people, a typical day begins with a handful of pills — for blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol and heart disease. But a new global review suggests that in very frail older adults, continuing all long-term medicines may not always be necessary — and in many cases, carefully stopping some of them may be safe.

The findings, published in the journal 'BMC Geriatrics', come from an analysis of patients with advanced frailty, dementia or limited life expectancy — a group often prescribed multiple medicines despite unclear long-term benefit. Researchers found that reducing or discontinuing such drugs did not lead to a rise in deaths or major complications in most cases.

Many of these medicines are meant to prevent problems years later. But for frail or seriously ill patients, those benefits may never be realised. Instead, taking multiple drugs can increase the risk of dizziness, weakness, confusion and falls, often leading to hospitalisation.

iStock

Deprescribing should be structured — based on goals of care, frailty and life expectancy — with careful tapering and monitoring, said Dr Rommel Tickoo, director of internal medicine at Max Hospital, Saket

Doctors say this pattern of "polypharmacy", where patients take several medicines at once, is increasingly common among the elderly in India. "They often see multiple specialists and prescriptions are not always reviewed together. In frail older adults, over-treatment can do more harm than good — for instance, aspirin for primary prevention should be avoided, excessive blood pressure control can lead to falls, and drugs like diuretics, insulin or sulfonylureas can cause electrolyte imbalance or hypoglycaemia. The focus should be on reducing medicines where the risks outweigh the benefits," said Dr Pulin Gupta, professor in the department of medicine at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

"In frail elderly patients, stopping some preventive medicines is generally safe if done carefully, though those with prior heart attack or stroke need caution," said Dr Rommel Tickoo, director of internal medicine at Max Hospital, Saket. He added that commonly overused drugs include statins for primary prevention, tightly controlled diabetes medicines like insulin or sulfonylureas, multiple blood pressure drugs, sleeping pills, long-term acid suppressants and anticholinergics.

"Deprescribing should be structured — based on goals of care, frailty and life expectancy — with careful tapering and monitoring," he said, noting that reducing medicines often leads to fewer falls, better cognition and improved energy levels.

Families often assume more medicines mean better care, but the opposite can be true. Each added drug raises the risk of interactions. The review reflects a shift from aggressive prevention to patient-centred care, where treatment aligns with health and priorities. Experts caution that medicines should not be stopped casually; reduction must be supervised, with each drug reviewed for need.

For requisitioned vehicles, govt to pay third party damages: SC

New Delhi: Supreme Court has said that if a private vehicle requisitioned by a district administration meets with an accident, then liability would be fastened on govt and not the insurance company for payment of compensation, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N K Singh said, "Where a vehicle is requisitioned for public functions and an incident occurs during the period of such requisition, liability ought properly to be borne by the requisitioning authority, and not by the insurer engaged by the owner for the vehicle's regular and voluntary use."

A bus owned by Kidzee Corner School in Gwalior was requisitioned by the district administration for gram panchayat elections. During this period, it hit a motorcyclist causing his death in Jan 2010. The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal awarded compensation of Rs 5.1 lakh with 6% interest. SC in 2024 had enhanced the compensation to Rs 27 lakh.

Rejecting the district administration's plea that fastening liability on civic authorities would send a wrong signal, a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N K Singh said when govt requisitions a private vehicle, its owner is divested of custody.

Writing the judgment, Justice Karol said, "During this period, the owner neither directs its use nor derives any benefit from it. It only stands to reason that in such circumstances, if an untoward incident occurs, responsibility would properly rest with the requisitioning authority and not with the insurer engaged by the owner."

SC said, "Compelled deployment for public functions cannot reasonably be characterised as 'regular use'... To fasten liability upon the insurer... would be to extend the contract beyond the risk that was agreed to be covered."

TN law univ stands by student as critique of SC triggers storm

Times News Network

Trichy: Tamil Nadu National Law University has decided to stand by its final-year law student, A Rishi Kumar, whose blog post criticising the apex court's stand in the Class VIII NCERT lesson issue unleashed an avalanche of responses, both negative and positive.

After receiving calls and letters from individuals claiming to be lawyers from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra urging the university to direct the student to take down the post —called 'The SC has no spine' — on the grounds that it would amount to contempt of court, the university did write to the student requesting him to delete the post in the "best interest of the institution since its reputation" was at stake.

However, after Rishi sent a strongly worded response asserting that he would not delete the post as it was written in his personal capacity, the university chose to reconsider its stance. The student said: "It should be clear that the university has absolutely no jurisdiction over my personal expression. You do not own my voice or conscience."

Initially the univ asked the student to delete his post but on his refusal, it decided to back him. 'He stood for his constitutional values. Fair criticism of courts is permitted, and SC is no exception,' the registrar said

The callers threatened to take up the matter with the Bar Council. "Therefore, as an advisory note, and to protect him since he has only two months left to complete his course, we asked him to take it down," said registrar S M Balakrishnan. "However, since he is not willing to take it down and is ready to face anything externally, the university will stand by him. He stood for his constitutional values. Fair criticism of the courts is always permitted, and the top court is no exception," the registrar said. No disciplinary action had been taken against the student, and he continues to attend classes, the official added.

Rishi published the blog on his Substack on March 14, criticising SC's Feb ruling to ban the Class VIII NCERT textbook over chapters related to "judicial corruption". Within days, the post spread across social media platforms. "It spread in ways I didn't expect," Rishi said, adding that strangers began tracing his contact details and reaching out — some in support and some against.

The blog was appreciated by lawyers such as Prashant Bhushan.

Odisha eases booze sale but introduces de-addiction cess

Ashok.Pradhan
@timesofindia.com

Bhubaneswar: Starting April 1, people in Odisha can buy their tipple from super-premium, air-conditioned outlets of at least 4,000sq ft in shopping malls and prime city locations.

The experience, however, will be a little heavier on the pocket, with a new de-addiction cess of 0.5% imposed and excise duty and import fees increased across categories. Govt has created a Rs 100-crore fund for anti-alcoholism and drug de-addiction campaigns.

The state on Thursday announced a three-year excise policy — the first by the Mohan Charan Majhi govt — to "ensure continuity and predictability".

The cess and increase in excise duty and fees might see retail prices of Indian-made foreign liquor going up by 10%-15% in the state after the import fee was raised from Rs 15-50 per LPL (litre of spirit at 50% alcohol strength). A 650ml bottle of beer may cost Rs 5-12 more. Imported premium whisky and rum could see a steeper jump of Rs 150-300 per bottle, industry insiders said.

The policy says no liquor shop will be allowed near Jagannath Temple, on Badadanda, and in beach shacks in Puri. While no outlet currently exists on Badadanda, govt reiterated the ban in the policy for the first time, considering religious sensitivities.

The state has also scrapped the rule that forced shops to lift a fixed quantity of stock, and has instead introduced a system where stores must ensure govt gets minimum guaranteed excise revenue, regardless of how much liquor they lift.

'62 war bridge now a cafe on China border

Rajib Dutta & Joken Ete | TNN

Itanagar/Dibrugarh: Coffee steams and tea steeps where convoys once rolled. On a 1962 war relic that carried soldiers into uncertainty on India's far edge in the North-East, visitors now pause and look out. A bridge between the past and the present.

Perched over Nyamjang Chu river in remote Zemithang village, a decommissioned Bailey bridge has been upcycled into Border Brew Cafe — a striking blend of military history and grassroots enterprise barely 20km from the Chinese border in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

History runs deeper here. Zemithang marked the entry point for the 14th Dalai Lama in 1959 as he fled Tibet, a prelude to tensions that spiralled into war three years later.

Built by the Army's Gajraj Corps in 31 days under Operation Sadbhavna, the cafe doubles as a compact museum chronicling the Sino-Indian war and early battles that raged across Tawang sector.

the cafe doubles as a museum chronicling the Sino-Indian war and battles that raged across Tawang sector

Zemithang sits over 100km north of Tawang town, a 5-hour drive along steep, winding roads via Lumla. A rougher, weather-prone route runs past Sangetsar lake. This tranquil valley more than 7,000 feet above sea level once saw a different kind of traffic. This is where Chinese forces breached the border and marched into the region in 1962.

The Bailey bridge served for decades as a lifeline for troop movement before a new span at Babtangkang took over, turning the old steel into redundancy — until the Army flipped the script.

A glassy vistadome crowns the structure, opening wide views of jagged Himalayan ridges and the river's rush below. Inside, a 'Wall of Valour' lines up portraits and names of soldiers from 1962, images frozen in bunkers and open ground. Two mannequins draw a stark contrast — khaki cottons and fibre jerseys of another era against modern thermal gear and quick-dry fabric — charting how the Army has evolved since that longshot defence in high altitude.

Women from the resident Monpa tribe run the cafe, serving coffee, tea, sandwiches, momo, and the regional specialty — butter tea called suja. The Rs 80 lakh cafe aims to seed income in a frontier economy while nudging tourists beyond Tawang's usual circuit. "It opens opportunity for locals and strengthens border tourism," Lumla MLA Tsering Lhamu said.

Army officers described the bridge-to-bistro project as a first-of-its-kind in the North-East — heritage infrastructure repurposed for modern use, with community at the centre. Eastern Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen RC Tiwari hailed troops' efforts, calling it a living example of Operation Sadbhavna's push for goodwill and socio-economic lift in border belts.